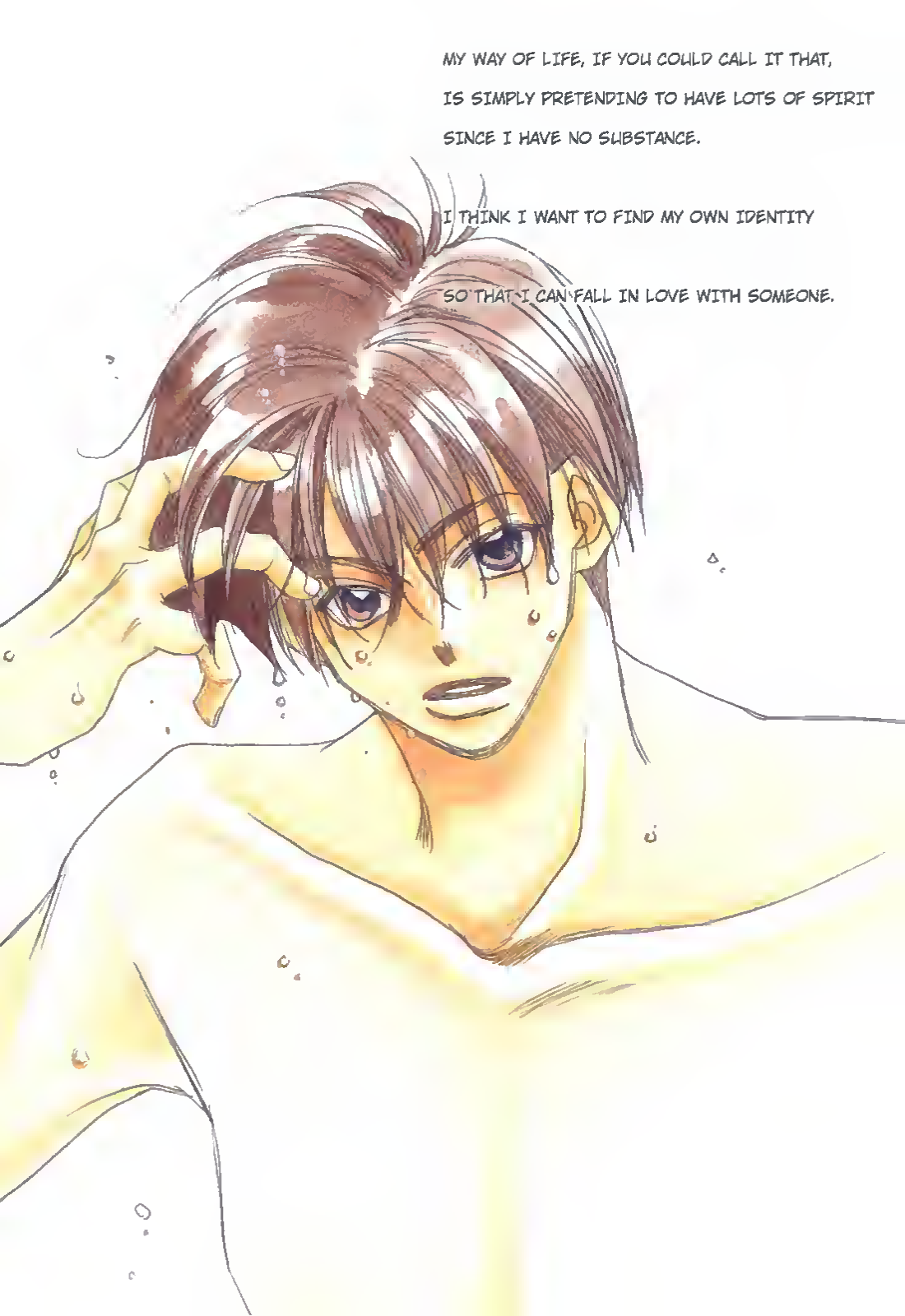
SUPER BBC

同棲愛 ③

水城せとな


MY WAY OF LIFE, IF YOU COULD CALL IT THAT,
IS SIMPLY PRETENDING TO HAVE LOTS OF SPIRIT
SINCE I HAVE NO SUBSTANCE.
I THINK I WANT TO FIND MY OWN IDENTITY
SO THAT I CAN FALL IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE.

CONTENTS

DOUSEI AI: LOVE UNDER ONE ROOF
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同棲愛

どうせいあい

CHAPTER 17: SWEET-AND-SOUR PORK NIGHT

...zzz
...
SMACK

SNORE
すぅ
POLO
.....
.....
WHEN DID HE CRAWL INTO MY BED!?
WHAT THE...?!
SNORE
すぅ
I EVEN PUT OUT A FUTON FOR HIM...

THIS IS SOMETHING I COULDN'T HAVE EXPECTED.
WELL...
MY MATERNAL INSTINCT KICKED IN WITH A ZING...
WHEN HE APPEALED TO ME WITH A DEFENSELESS HEART LIKE THAT...
HOW SHOULD I PUT IT...
SOB
I'M SAYING SUCH WEIRD THINGS...
...WHAT'S UP WITH ME?
HM?
BRUSH
BRUSH
BRUSH
PLOP
...JUST LIKE WITH TSUBAKI.
MAYBE I HAVE A WEAKNESS FOR CUTE THINGS.

AH... AH HA HA...
HUH?
WHY DID YOU GET INTO MY BED?
HEY...
...SO...
WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING ON DOING TODAY?
POKE
...HMMM...
R-REALLY...?
SO I GOT IN.
IT FELT NICE. ♡
AND I THOUGHT HOW NICE IT WOULD BE TO SLEEP IN THE BED...
I'M NOT USED TO THE HARD FLOOR...
INNOCENCE
YOU CAN BE EXPOSED TO DANGER EVEN WITH GUYS...
HE SHOULD BE A LITTLE MORE CAUTIOUS...
YOU SHOULD AT LEAST CONTACT THEM.
YOUR PARENTS ARE WORRIED, RIGHT?
I DON'T MIND YOU STAYING ONE OR TWO DAYS AT MY PLACE, BUT...
UH...
ZING
...YEAH...
.....
DO I HAVE TO... GO BACK?

WELL THEN, I HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL NOW...
ANY REQUESTS FOR DINNER?
.....
I'M OFF NOW.
OKAY, SWEET-AND-SOUR PORK IT IS.
MAYBE SWEET-AND-SOUR PORK? ♡
WELL...
UM... UM...
SEE YOU SOON.

...CONTACT THEM... HUH?
...BUT...
ALL ALONE...
IT'LL BE HARD TO EXPLAIN... I DON'T WANNA...
I FEEL LIKE SURELY RIGHT NOW THERE'S A HOUSE-WIDE PANIC.
OH WELL, I GIVE UP.
ROLL

...I WANT TO KNOW MORE...
WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS HE?
AH... SMELLS NICE. ♡
TO SOMEHOW CARE THIS MUCH ABOUT ME SO SOON AFTER WE MET...
KOUTAROU IS SUCH A NICE GUY.
ZZZZ...
KOUTAROU SMELLS NICE...
IS IT HIS SHAMPOO?
THAT WAS KIND OF PERVERTED OF ME TO THINK...
.....
.....
.....

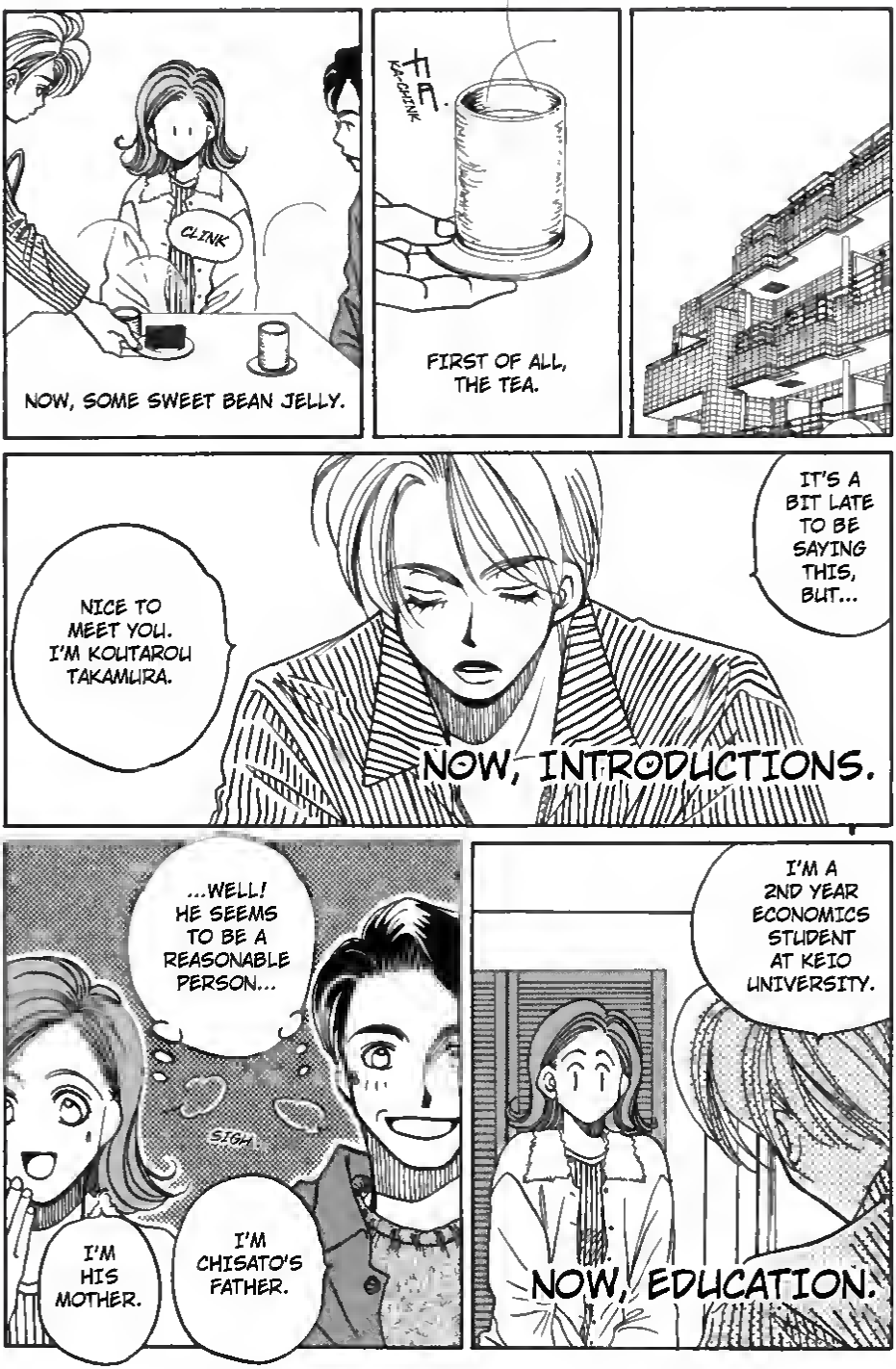
PORK AND SHIITAKE MUSH-ROOMS...
SWEET-AND-SOUR PORK
PORK SHOULDER
SHIITAKE MUSHRO
CARROTS
CUCUMBER
ETC
...CARROTS, CUCUMBER...
I WANT A CHINESE-STYLE SOUP TOO...
OKAY, LET'S MAKE WONTON SOUP. ♡
...IS THERE ENOUGH CALCIUM?
HE'S A GROWING KID, AFTER ALL.
...THIS IS KINDA NICE...
DOING SOMETHING FOR SOMEONE ELSE... LIKE THIS...

SNORE
DING
DONG
COMING, COMING...
CLICK
HUH...
DONG
WELCOME HOME, KOUTA-
...ROU...

CHISATO!!
DON'T GIVE ME A THAT!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WE WERE SO WORRIED!
WHEN WE ASKED YOUR FRIENDS, THEY SAID YOU WERE WITH THE ADVISOR FROM CRAM SCHOOL LAST NIGHT.
WE LOOKED UP HIS ADDRESS AND CAME HERE TO LOOK FOR YOU.
SO, LET'S GO HOME NOW, OKAY?
CA-CHA!
D- DAD... MOM...
HOW...?!
U.S.A.

YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND EVEN IF I TOLD YOU, DAD...
CHISATO, DO YOU HATE HAVING ME AS YOUR MOTHER?!
WH- WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, CHISATO! IS SOMETHING UPSETTING GOING ON?!
CHI- CHISATO?!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF STAYING WITH THIS WARM AND FUZZY FAMILY!
NOOO! I DON'T WANNA GO BACK!!
わぁ!
THAT'S ENOUGH! JUST LEAVE ALREADY!!
わあああ
WAAAAA!
CHISATOOO! I WAS A BAD MOTHER, WASN'T I?
DON'T CRY, SILLY! KEEP IT TOGETHER!
KOUTAROOOOU!
...CHISATO!!

JUST WHAT IS GOING ON WITH YOU AND CHISATO?!
GO FOR IT, DEAR!
IS IT YOU!? ARE YOU MR. TAKAMURA?
YOUR PARENTS...?
HUH?
WE'RE NOT FRIENDS...
AND WE'RE CERTAINLY NOT LOVERS.
NOTHING AT ALL.
UNFAZED...
...IT'S DIFFICULT TO STAND AROUND TALKING LIKE THIS...
SO PLEASE COME INSIDE.
.....
POLO USA


CLINK
NOW, SOME SWEET BEAN JELLY.
KA-CHINK
FIRST OF ALL, THE TEA.
IT'S A BIT LATE TO BE SAYING THIS, BUT...
NICE TO MEET YOU. I'M KOUTAROU TAKAMURA.
NOW, INTRODUCTIONS.
...WELL! HE SEEMS TO BE A REASONABLE PERSON...
SIGH
I'M HIS MOTHER.
I'M CHISATO'S FATHER.
I'M A 2ND YEAR ECONOMICS STUDENT AT KEIO UNIVERSITY.
NOW, EDUCATION.

I HAD ABSOLUTELY NO QUESTIONABLE INTENTIONS IN BRINGING CHISATO HERE.
I BELIEVE I ALREADY MENTIONED THIS BEFORE, BUT...
...HE'S A LITTLE STRANGE...
.....
CHISATO IS A BOY, YOU KNOW. HA HA HA...
WH- WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THEY REALLY AREN'T CAUTIOUS AT ALL...
IS THAT AN AMERICAN JOKE? HA HA HA!
UM...
...WELL...
Y- YEAH...
CHISATO,
YOU SHOULD GO AHEAD AND TALK TO YOUR PARENTS YOURSELF.

SCHOOL...
...I WAS THINKING OF QUITTING...
POLO
.....
OH, YOU'RE BEING BULLIED BY SOMEONE, AREN'T YOU? THAT'S IT, RIGHT?
THERE'S NO WAY CHISATO WOULD HAVE GONE BAD, RIGHT?
WHEN DID YOU BECOME SUCH A DELINQUENT?!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, CHISATO!?

...THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT YOU'D SAY...
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A BIG UPROAR LIKE THIS.
YOU'RE A DELINQUENT OR YOU'RE BEING BULLIED...

AND THEN, WHEN THEY'RE 20, THEY MIGHT BE WORKING AT SOME RESTAURANT, RIGHT?
...FOR EXAMPLE, IT'S FINE IF...
SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO BECOME A COOK STUDIES HARD TO BECOME A COOK WITHOUT GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL.
I DON'T KNOW...
CHI-CHISATO, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE?
...?
DIFFICULT ENGLISH, DIFFICULT MATH, AND DIFFICULT JAPANESE...
I'VE STARTED NOT WANTING TO DO ANYTHING AT ALL.
BUT...
WHILE I'M DOING ALL TYPES OF THINGS AT SCHOOL LIKE...

BY THAT TIME, SURELY...
I WOULD HAVE BECOME A KID WITHOUT A SPECIALTY OR ANYTHING.
BY THEN, IT WOULD BE TOO LATE.
IF THAT'S THE CASE...
WHY DON'T YOU GO TO SCHOOL...
AND THINK ABOUT IT AFTER GOING TO COLLEGE?
.....
...LIKE ROCK CANDY WITH ITS CRYSTALS WORN OFF...
B-BUT THAT'S...
SHOCK
...PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE...
FOR A WHILE...
WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO FOR YOU?
...BUT...

I JUST PUT UP WITH IT.
YOU WERE ALWAYS A CHILD WHO NEVER ONCE SAID ANYTHING SELFISH.
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU, CHISATO...
AND PUT UP WITH PRETENDING TO HAVE FUN.
I CAN PUT UP WITH GOING TO SCHOOL...
I CAN PUT UP WITH IT AGAIN.
WHILE I AM TRULY BORED WITH EVERYTHING.
BUT, I'M SO BORED.
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONES SMILING AND HAVING FUN...
UM...
SOB SOB SOB...
SOB SOB...
WHAT AN AWFUL THING TO SAY...
HIC

I'M MAKING SWEET-AND SOUR PORK TONIGHT...
WOULD YOU ALL LIKE TO JOIN ME?
HA HA HA! DON'T BLAME IT ON THE STOVETOP!
IT'S TRUE. OUR STOVE-TOP IS ELECTRIC, SO...
CHINESE COOKING JUST WON'T WORK WITH LOW HEAT.
THE MEAT IN OUR SWEET-AND-SOUR PORK IS USUALLY TOUGHER...
IT'S SO DELICIOUS! YOU'RE AMAZING, KOUTAROU!
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
YOU'VE GOTTA GET YOUR CALCIUM. YOU'RE STILL GROWING, AFTER ALL.
YEP. ♡
WHAT IS IT? YOUNG SARDINES?
CHISATO, EAT YOUR RICE WITH SOME OF THIS ON TOP.

IF THERE'S SOMETHING YOU REALLY WANT TO DO...
THEN I THINK YOU SHOULD DO IT.
...
CHISATO,
WE'LL SIGN YOUR NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL ANYTIME.
WHETHER OR NOT YOU REALLY WANT TO QUIT SCHOOL.
BUT PLEASE DECIDE AFTER CONSIDERING A LITTLE LONGER...
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT FOR A WHILE.
I GOT IT...
...AND...
.....
OKAY...
I FEEL THE SAME WAY.

I WANT...
TO STAY AT KOUTAROU'S PLACE A LITTLE LONGER...
UH...
ZING
GLANCE
CAN I?
I DON'T MIND AT ALL...
...YEAH,

I'M SO GLAD THEY UNDERSTAND.
THEY LIKED YOU A LOT, KOUTAROU. ♡
SPLASH
SSSHH
WOULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN FINE TO GO HOME?
...NOW THAT YOUR PARENTS UNDERSTAND...
ZING
BUT...
YEP.
SPLASH
R-REALLY...
I WANT TO STAY WITH YOU, KOUTAROU!

HELLO, THIS IS MS. MIZUSHIRO.

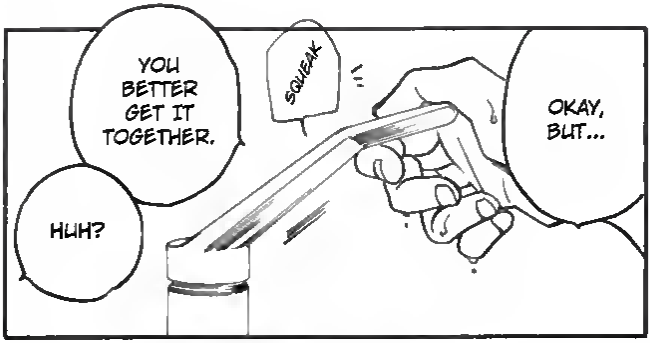
THANK YOU FOR PICKING UP *DOUSEI AI*.

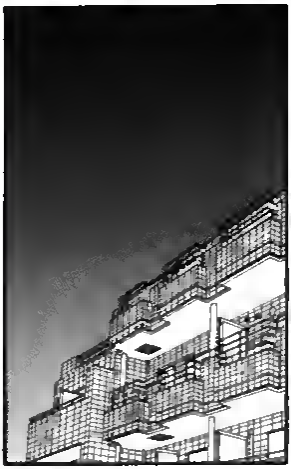
WITH THE STORY GETTING TO THIS CHAPTER AND THE CHARACTERS ALL ASSEMBLED, I AM FINALLY FILLED WITH THE FEELING THAT "NOW I'M WRITING *DOUSEI AI*."

WHEW... I MUST KEEP GOING...

I'D BE SO PLEASED IF YOU WOULD CONTINUE TO ACCOMPANY ME

MIZUSHIRO





ZZZZ...
TURN
3...
UUH...
MAYBE I WANTED...
TO BE LIKE THAT...
HE GREW UP SURROUNDED BY A CHEERFUL FAMILY...
AN INNOCENT CHILD...

YOU THINK I'M SOME SORT OF KINDLY OLDER BROTHER...
DON'T YOU?
.....
.....
WOULD HE RUN AWAY IF HE KNEW I WAS BI?
"I WANT TO STAY WITH YOU, KOUTAROU!"

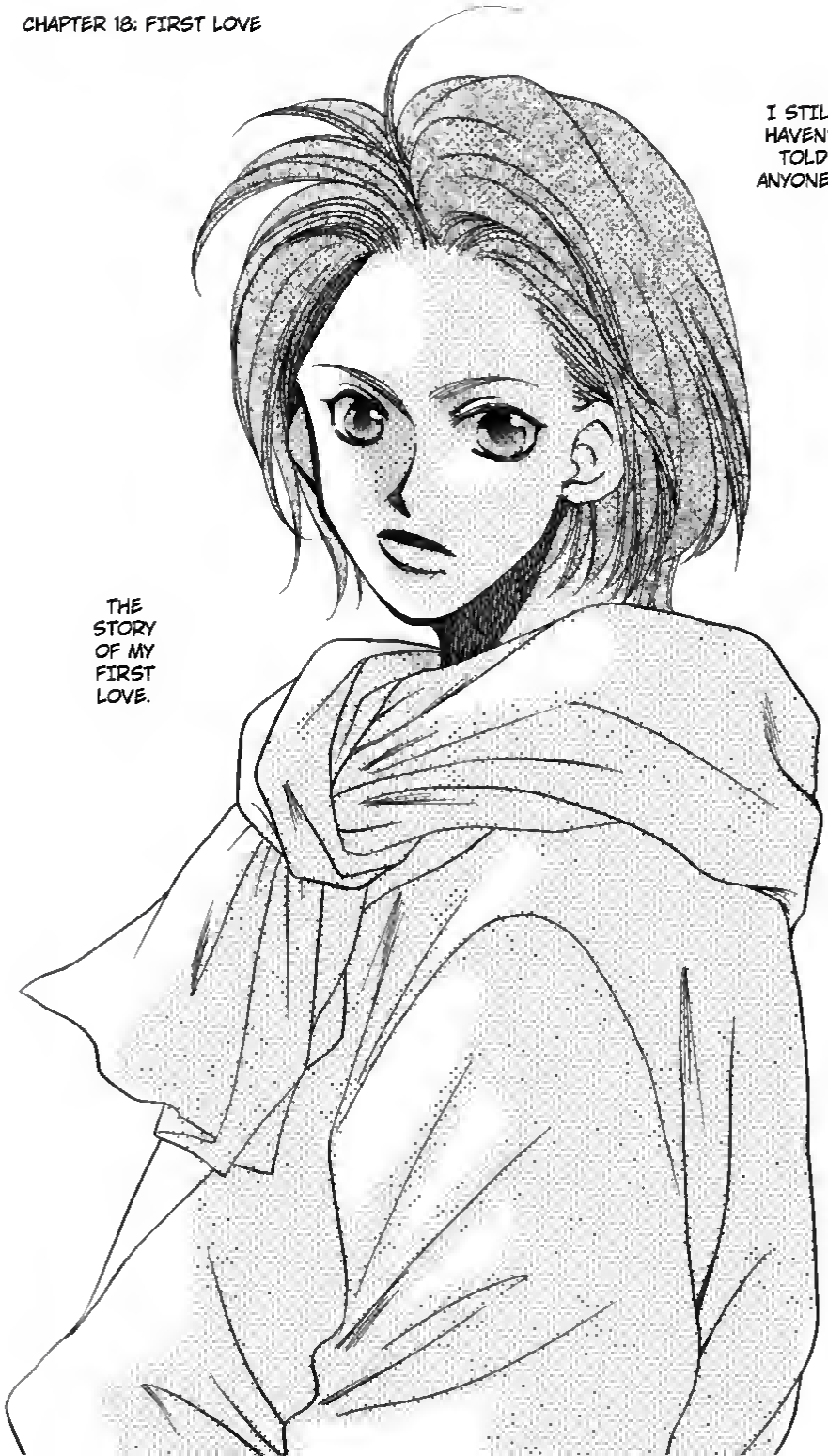
I DON'T WANT TO LET YOU KNOW...
THE TRUTH ABOUT ME...
WHAT TIME ARE YOU COMING HOME TODAY?
UM...
I'VE GOT THREE CLASSES, SO... AROUND 4 O'CLOCK.

...UH...
SO HE THINKS I'M ANNOYING AFTER ALL...
HEY, CHISATO,
HOW LONG WILL YOU BE HERE?
SWING
チャー!
YOU SEE, IF IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG TIME...
THEN I'LL MAKE YOU...
A SPARE KEY.

...OKAY!

FLASH
IS THAT YOU...
TSUBAKI...?

KAORU...?


I STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ANYONE...
THE STORY OF MY FIRST LOVE.

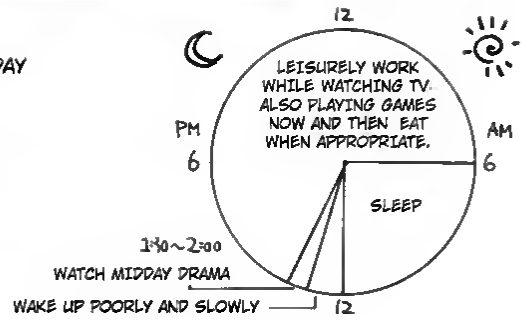
AUTHOR'S NOTES.

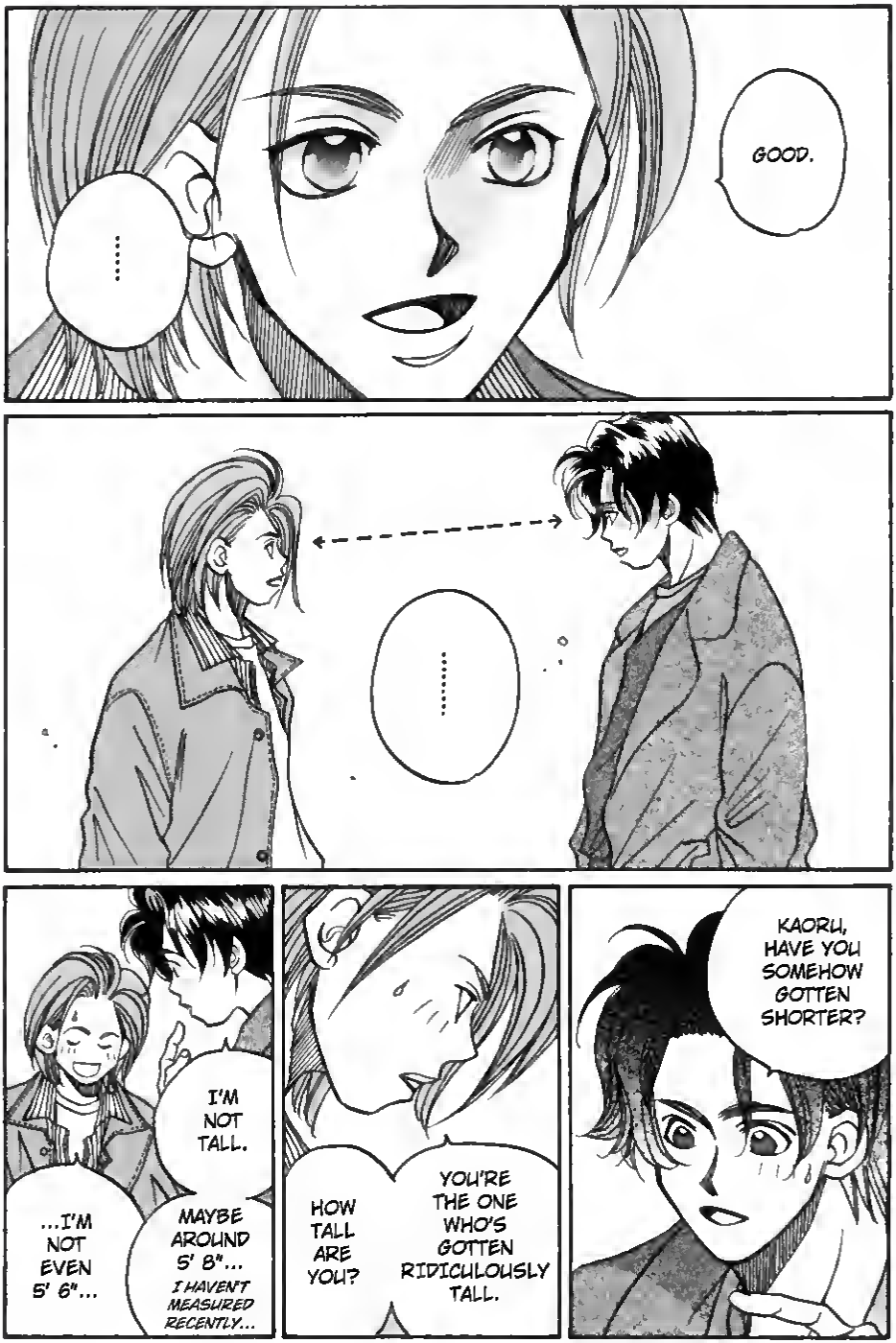
A VERY MIZUSHIRO-LIKE DAY

I TRIED MAKING A CIRCLE GRAPH OF MY LIFE.

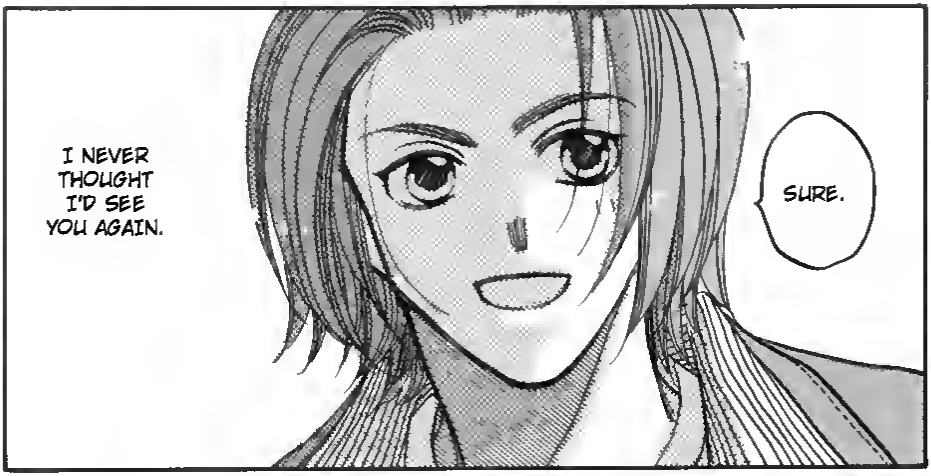
TO THINK THAT IT WOULD TURN OUT LIKE THIS...

I SHOULDN'T HAVE MADE THIS A GRAPH...

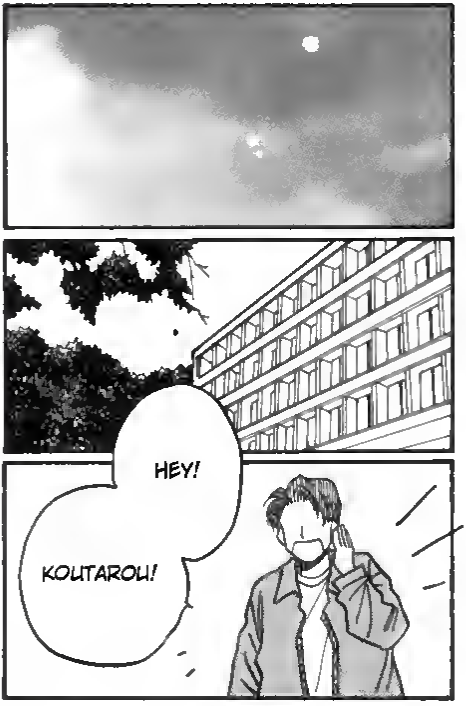



GOOD.
.....
.....
KAORU, HAVE YOU SOMEHOW GOTTEN SHORTER?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S GOTTEN RIDICULOUSLY TALL.
HOW TALL ARE YOU?
I'M NOT TALL.
MAYBE AROUND 5' 8"... I HAVEN'T MEASURED RECENTLY...
...I'M NOT EVEN 5' 6"...

...
PAT PAT
KAORU, THAT'S IT!
SMOKING SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL HAS STUNTED YOUR GROWTH, HUH?
YOU WERE SMOKING TOO, RIGHT?!
..BUT, YOU KNOW...
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT.
WANNA GO GET SOME-THING TO EAT?



NOW, AFTER FIVE YEARS...



YOU'VE SMILED AT ME ONCE AGAIN...

WE'RE HAVING A GROUP DATE TODAY.
YOU WANNA GO?
SORRY, I'LL PASS!
MAYBE NEXT TIME.
SEE YOU.
...WHAT'S UP WITH HIM?
HE'S BEEN REALLY FLAKY LATELY.
RUSHING OFF
HAS HE GOT A GIRL-FRIEND OR SOME-THING?
RIGHT NOW, THERE'S A CUTE BABY BIRD IN MY APARTMENT.

EVERY DAY, I TAKE CARE OF THAT LITTLE BIRD.
CHICKEN AND MUSHROOMS AND...
TODAY, THE SUPERMARKET IN FRONT OF THE STATION HAS A SALE.
I HAVE TO HURRY.
EVERY DAY, THAT LITTLE BIRD AWAITS MY RETURN WITH AN EMPTY STOMACH.
I WONDER IF I'VE EVER HAD SUCH FULFILLING DAYS IN MY LIFE UNTIL NOW.
.....
VIDEO GAMES, HUH?
COME TO THINK OF IT, HE HAS A LOT OF FREE TIME WHILE I'M NOT THERE...
CDs
VIDED GAMES
RA TA TA TA
PA-SHUN PA-SHUN

WELCOME HOME!
WOAH! IT'S CYBER TROOPERS VIRTUAL-ON! LET'S PLAY!
HE'S SO HAPPY... HE'S SO HAPPY...
HOW CUTE!
I THOUGHT YOU COULD KILL SOME TIME WITH THAT.
A SEGA SATURN!
THANK YOU!
I'M BACK.
TODAY IS WHITE STEW.
YAY!
I LOVE THAT!
I ALSO BOUGHT THIS.
IT'S A GIFT.
HUH?
I'VE STOPPED SMOKING IN MY APARTMENT.
I CUT CARROTS SMALLER.
I MAKE SURE TO BUY GREEN TEA ICE CREAM.

WHATEVER I'M DOING, I'M ALWAYS, ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT...
WHETHER IT WILL MAKE CHISATO HAPPY.
HOW'S THE SALAD?
I TRIED PUTTING MENTAIKO MAYONNAISE ON IT.
IT'S SCRUMP-TIOUS!
A HUGE HIT!
YOU'RE A GENIUS, KOUTAROU!
MY BODY IS TELLING ME...
I WANT TO DO ANYTHING I CAN FOR CHISATO.

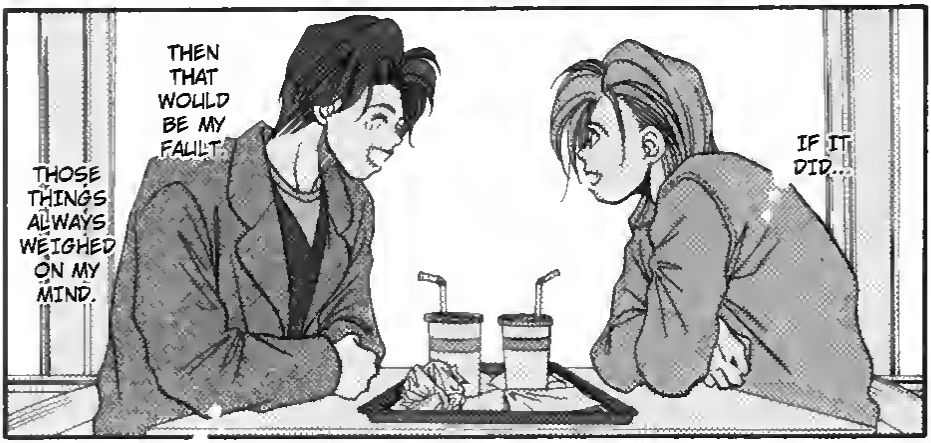
THANK YOU VERY...
OH!
HAMBURGERS
YOUR CHANGE IS $2.57.
TAKASAKI STATION
TO THE 2ND FLOOR
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
AH HA HA!
OH, OKAY.
I'LL BE ON THE 2ND FLOOR.
I'M GONNA GO...
WASH MY HANDS REAL QUICK...
NO...
IT'S FINE. IT'S FINE.
OH! I'M SO SORRY...
I'VE GOT IT.

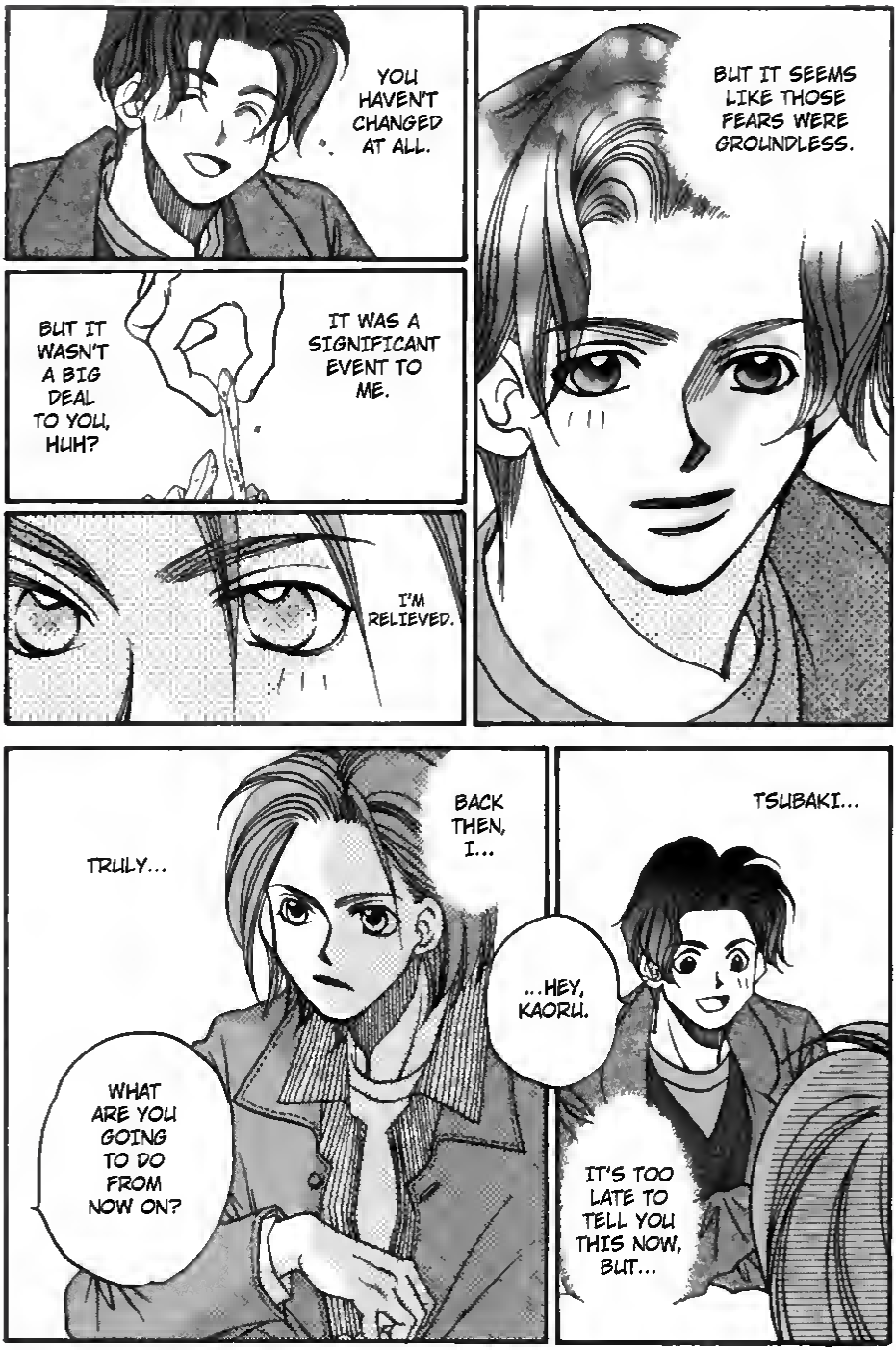
WOW! TOKYO, HUH?
HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE?
UM...
ABOUT A YEAR... I THINK.
...YEAH,
IT WAS...
INTERESTING?
I BET IT WAS REALLY INTER-ESTING.
HOW WAS IT THERE?
IT SUITED ME.
I'M GLAD I WENT.
IT WAS VERY INTERESTING.

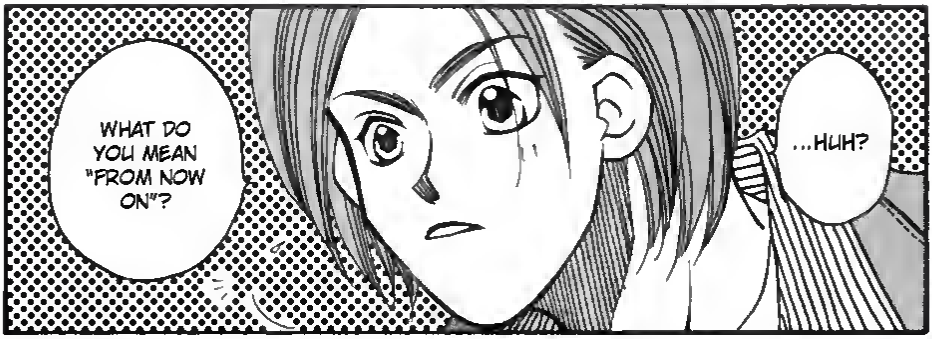
WHAT ABOUT YOU, KAORU?
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?
REALLY FRIENDLY.
TSUBAKI'S WAY OF SPEAKING THAT SEEMS QUIET, BUT...
HE HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL.
THAT'S GOOD.
...IT'S ALWAYS WORRIED ME.
I THOUGHT I'D SAVE UP SOME MONEY FIRST...
SO, I'M WORKING.
EVER SINCE THAT TIME...
REALLY?
YEP...
I'VE BEEN WORRIED.
ME?
...UH...
AFTER I GOT OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL, I THOUGHT I'D GO TO VOCATIONAL SCHOOL, BUT...

WHETHER THAT EVENT...
HURT YOU VERY DEEPLY...

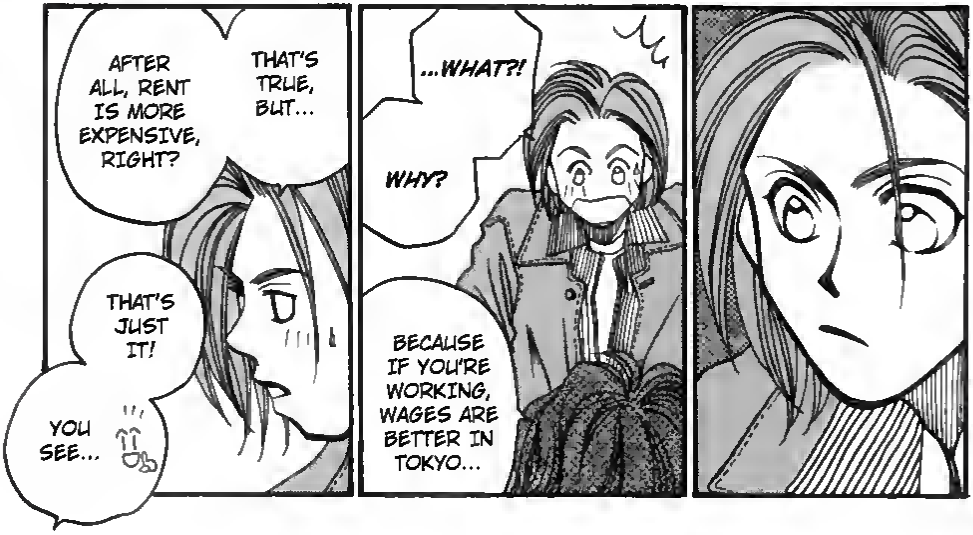
OR WHETHER THAT EVENT PERHAPS...
CHANGED YOU OR NOT.


IF IT DID...
THEN THAT WOULD BE MY FAULT.
THOSE THINGS ALWAYS WEIGHED ON MY MIND.

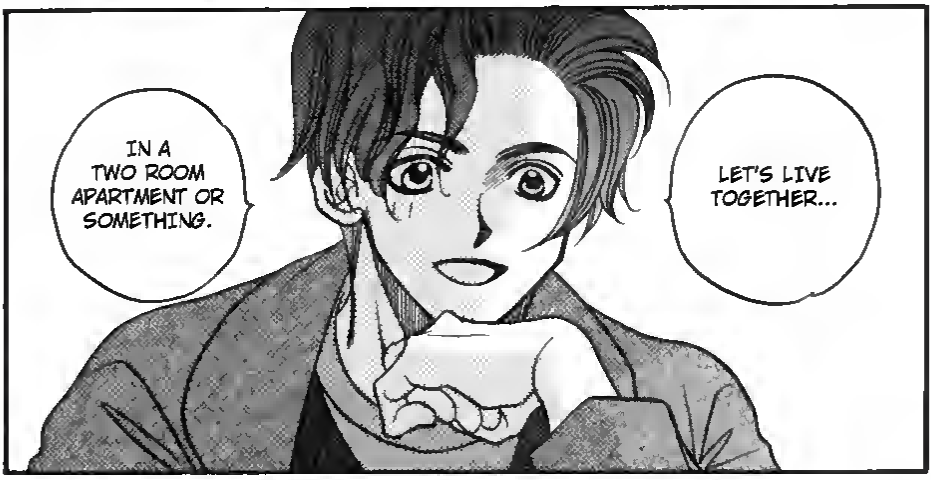

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL.
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE THOSE FEARS WERE GROUNDLESS.
IT WAS A SIGNIFICANT EVENT TO ME.
BUT IT WASN'T A BIG DEAL TO YOU, HUH?
I'M RELIEVED.
TSUBAKI...
BACK THEN, I...
TRULY...
...HEY, KAORU.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO FROM NOW ON?
IT'S TOO LATE TO TELL YOU THIS NOW, BUT...

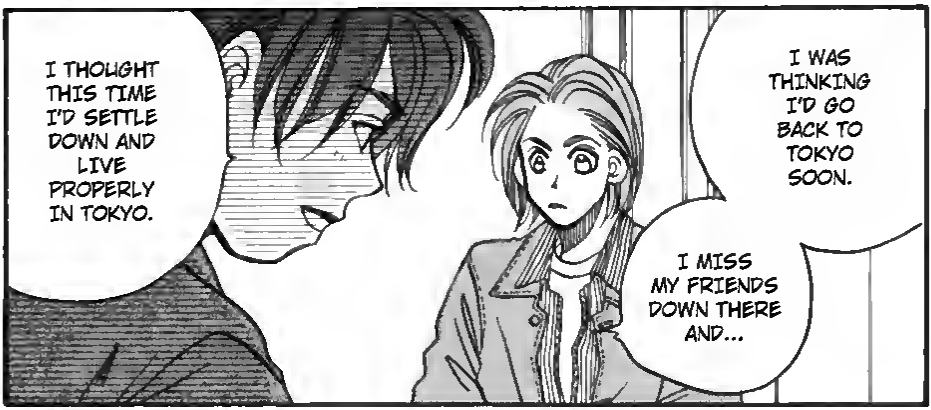

WHAT DO YOU MEAN "FROM NOW ON"?
...HUH?

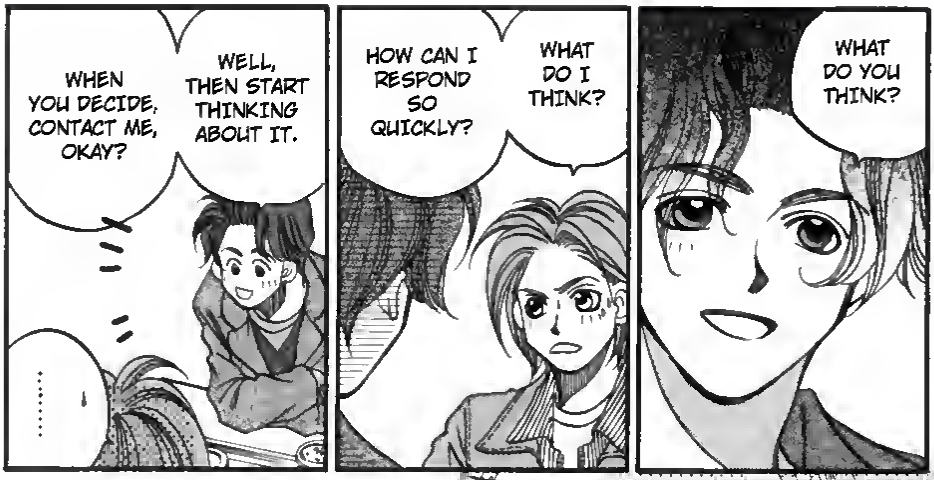
WANNA GO TO TOKYO WITH ME?

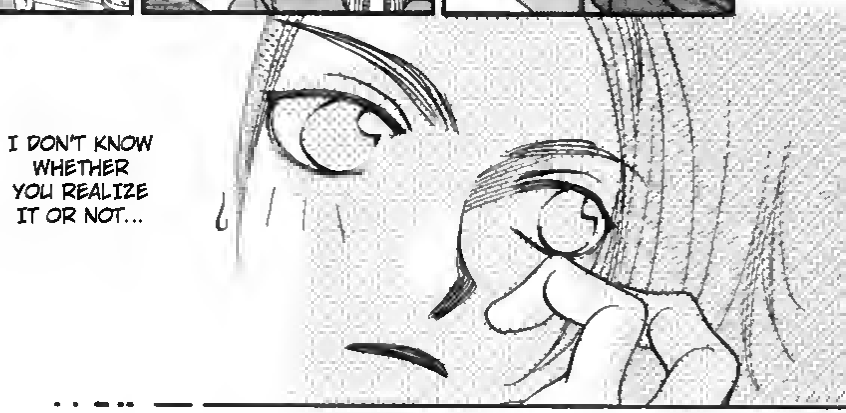

AFTER ALL, RENT IS MORE EXPENSIVE, RIGHT?
THAT'S TRUE, BUT...
THAT'S JUST IT!
YOU SEE...
...WHAT?!
WHY?
BECAUSE IF YOU'RE WORKING, WAGES ARE BETTER IN TOKYO...

LET'S RENT A PLACE TOGETHER!


IN A TWO ROOM APARTMENT OR SOMETHING.
LET'S LIVE TOGETHER...


I THOUGHT THIS TIME I'D SETTLE DOWN AND LIVE PROPERLY IN TOKYO.
I WAS THINKING I'D GO BACK TO TOKYO SOON.
I MISS MY FRIENDS DOWN THERE AND...


WHEN YOU DECIDE, CONTACT ME, OKAY?
WELL, THEN START THINKING ABOUT IT.
HOW CAN I RESPOND SO QUICKLY?
WHAT DO I THINK?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?



YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN QUITE FORCEFUL...

WHY WAS THAT SO ADORABLE?

CLICK
I'M TURNING OUT THE LIGHTS.
OKAY.
THERE WE GO
Paul Smith

...IF I DID, YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE.
...OH, YEAH...
DO YOU HAVE A GIRL-FRIEND OR ANYTHING?
...HEY, KOUTAROU,
I WONDER WHAT YOU'RE LIKE WHEN YOU'RE IN LOVE...
.....
KOUTAROU...
I WONDER HOW YOU CHANGE WHEN YOU'RE WITH SOMEONE YOU LOVE...
...WHY?
BECAUSE YOU'RE ALREADY SO NICE...

NO FAIR!
.....
I WON'T TELL YOU.
WHAT KIND OF PERSON ARE YOU?
WELL, TELL ME.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF GUY I AM.
DON'T SAY I'M NICE.
I THINK OF YOU?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT...
IT'S A SECRET!
...WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ME?
AT LEAST...
I'M NOT THE TYPE OF PERSON YOU THINK...
I AM.

IN THE FUTURE, WHOEVER MARRIES YOU...
WILL DEFINITELY BE HAPPY.

BECAUSE I'M SO INCREDIBLY HAPPY...
JUST TO BE LIVING WITH YOU RIGHT NOW.

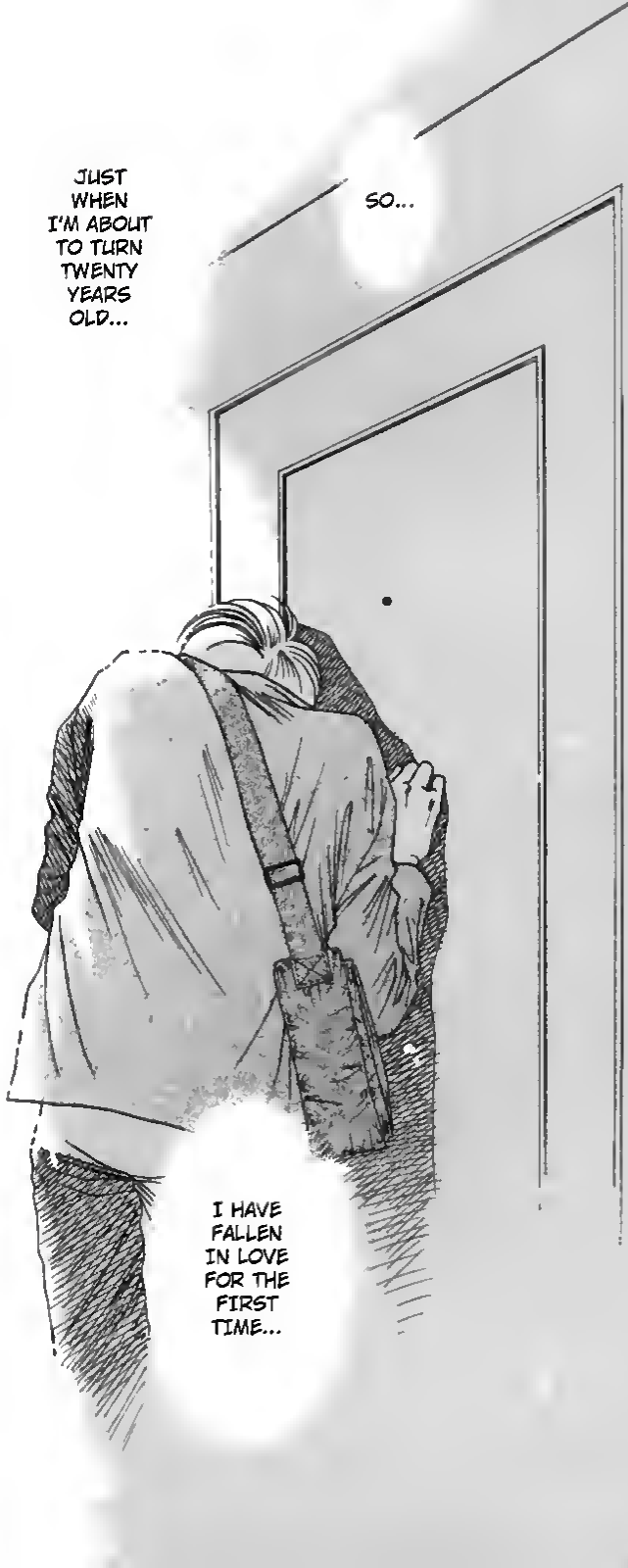
ZZZ...
...EVEN IF...
...I WERE LIKE THAT...

OKAY.
.....
GO AHEAD AND EAT THE LEFT-OVERS FOR DINNER.
WELL, I'M OFF.
I HAVE WORK TODAY, SO I'LL BE LATE.
IT'S LONELY TO EAT...
BY MYSELF!
BUT I'LL WAIT UNTIL YOU COME HOME.
THEN I'LL BE HOME AS SOON AS I CAN...
OKAY!
R-REALLY...

BA-DUM
BA-DUM
COME BACK SOON, OKAY?
WELL...
I'M OFF...

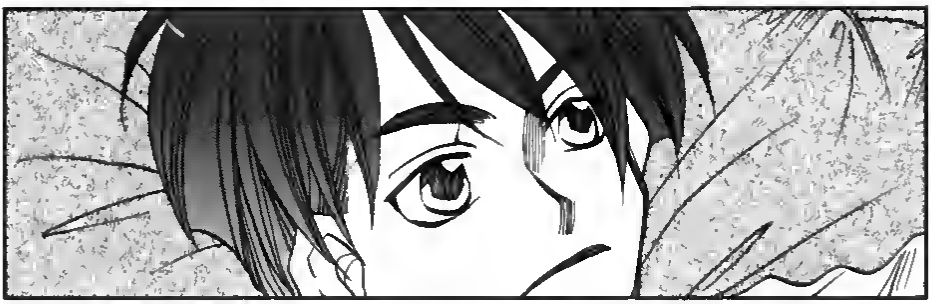
SHUNK
AAH...
MY HEART IS RACING SO FAST.

IT'S LIKE I'M RUNNING UP A HILL...
"I WONDER...
WHAT YOU'RE LIKE WHEN YOU'RE IN LOVE."
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN MYSELF LIKE THIS...


JUST WHEN I'M ABOUT TO TURN TWENTY YEARS OLD...
SO...
I HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE FOR THE FIRST TIME...

HOW BORING...
AH... I'M ALONE AGAIN.
ぽつん...
ALL ALONE...
ぽふっ
FWUMP
I JUST WANT TO BE WITH HIM MORE...
EVEN THOUGH KOUTAROU UNDERSTANDS ME COMPLETELY...
I FEEL LIKE I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND KOUTAROU AT ALL.

EVEN CLOSER TO HIM...
SO CLOSE THAT I'M INSIDE HIM...
...I WANT TO BE WITH KOUTAROU MORE.



.....
"INSIDE HIM"?

SOMEHOW...
I'M SAYING WEIRD THINGS... AGAIN...

CHAPTER 19: THIS IS BAD, ISN'T IT?

AS SOON AS LOVE BEGAN, EACH DAY BECAME SHORTER.
BEEP BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP BEEP

BEEP BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP BEEP
BEEP
CLICK
ZZZZZZ...
SOUND ASLEEP
.....
.....
CHISATO ...
ZZZZ...
HE'S SO ADORABLE...
SLEEPING DEFENSE-LESSLY LIKE THIS.
ZING

.....
HUFF HUFF HUFF
WITH MY FINGERS AND TONGUE!!
I'M DYING TO MAKE HIM COME!
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
...I WANT TO ATTEND TO THIS BODY...
...LOVE IS QUITE EXHAUSTING...
ZZZZ...
WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE YOU THINKING?
CALM DOWN, KOUTAROU.
.....

WELL, IF YOU DON'T MIND...
...IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE HE'LL WAKE UP...
RUMMAGE
WHOA! HE'S QUITE...
.....
...OH, HOW ADORABLE!
...THERE, THERE. THERE YOU GO.
RUB
RUB
NO, I'M DOING SOMETHING NICE FOR HIM.
...IS THIS BAD... I WONDER?
RUB
RUB

……
…UH
…NNM

WHAT!?
はっ!?

WAAAH!
KOUTAROU!?
N-
NO...
NOT...
WITH
YOUR
HAND...!
AH...
AH, AH...
LET ME
COME...
RIGHT
INSIDE
YOU...
KOUTAROU...!
BEEP

JOLT
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
IT WAS... A DREAM...
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
ALL CALM
OH, 'MORNING.
(WASHING → HIS HANDS)
SPLISH SPLASH
YOU'RE WIDE AWAKE FOR ONCE.

...CHISATO,
HAVE YOU REALLY BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE WHOLE SCHOOL THING?
UH...
Y-YEAH...
YOU'RE KINDA HARSH TODAY...
IF I DON'T PUT PRESSURE ON YOU ONCE IN A WHILE, YOU'LL JUST KEEP SLACKING OFF, RIGHT?
I'M SORRY...
I'M AGAINST YOU QUITTING LITTLE BY LITTLE FOR NO REASON!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO GO, GO WITH A SENSE OF PURPOSE! IF YOU'RE GOING TO QUIT, QUIT WITH A SENSE OF PURPOSE!
WHEN YOU SAY SENSE OF PURPOSE...
DID YOU HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
I JUST ACCEPTED IT.
SCHOOL IS A PLACE TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE A LIVING.
IT WAS A NECESSARY PLACE FOR ME TO GO TO BECOME A REGULAR OFFICE WORKER.

YOU WANT TO BE... A REGULAR OFFICE WORKER?
YES.
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'M NOT PARTICULARLY TALENTED.
...I WANT TO BE A REGULAR OFFICE WORKER,
HAVE A REGULAR ROMANCE, AND GET MARRIED...
AS FOR KIDS, I WANT TWO BOYS.
THEN I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF MY CHILDREN WITH MY WIFE... AND MAKE A HAPPY HOME.
THAT'S RIGHT. JUST LIKE...
YOUR HOME, CHISATO.
THAT'S MY DREAM...

THAT WAS TASTY.
カチャ
CLATTER
HE WOULD HAVE NO REASON TO BE THIS GOOD AT HOUSEWORK, RIGHT?
IF A GUY HAD GROWN UP IN A REGULAR HOME...
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
MY FAMILY WASN'T LIKE THAT...
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE ANYONE...
COULD DO THAT...
SO I'VE PRETTY MUCH BEEN COOKING EVERY DAY, EVER SINCE I WAS A KID.
MY OLDER BROTHER AND I SPLIT UP THE HOUSEWORK BETWEEN US.
IT'S BECAUSE MY FAMILY DIDN'T HAVE A MOTHER.
……
シュー
SSHHH
あはは
HA HA HA
MY BROTHER TOO.
HE WAS HAPPY TO BE MARRIED, BUT SECRETLY COMPLAINED THAT THE FOOD HE MADE TASTED BETTER.

AR...
ARGH...
TAKE THAT!!
You lose.
BOOOM
AWWW!
FWUMP
I HAVE TO THINK PROPERLY...
ABOUT MY FUTURE...
OR I'LL TURN INTO AN IDIOT.
...IT'S NO GOOD. I CAN'T SPEND EVERY DAY LIKE THIS...

...SO THAT WAS THE KIND OF FAMILY...
KOUTAROU GREW UP IN...
.....
DREAM...
.....
...HIS DREAM IS A REGULAR HOME, HUH?
BLUSH
POOF

I'VE HAD A LACK OF EXERCISE RECENTLY, SO MAYBE THE TENSION HAS JUST PILED UP.
BECAUSE REALLY... KOUTAROU...
WH- WHY DID I HAVE A DREAM LIKE THAT...
SEX WITH KOUTAROU!!
SEX IS BORING! YOU HATE IT!!
GET IT TOGETHER, CHISATO!
TREMBLE TREMBLE
THAT'S NOT IT!
DAN
SEX WITH KOUTA-ROU!!
SHAKE SHAKE
UM...
NO, NO. THIS IS NOT WHAT I SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT.
NO! THAT WAS A DREAM!
THIS IS BAD, CHISATO!!
BANG
BANG
YOU HAVE TO FORGET ABOUT IT!!
SEX WITH KOUTAROU!!
HEH!
B- BUT...
KOUTAROU'S FINGERS FELT SO GOOD...
GULP

...MAYBE I SHOULD START JOGGING OR SOMETHING TOMORROW...
...YEAH...
A LITTLE BIT...
AREN'T YOU KIND OF TIRED OUT TODAY?
MOVE YOUR HEAD, PLEASE
KOUTAROU...
.....
.....
HEY! NEXT BREAK, LET'S GO TO A FITNESS CLUB.
THAT'S A GOOD IDEA.

DO YOU LIKE SEX?
IT WAS BORING...
AND GROSS.
I DID IT FOR THE FIRST TIME A WHILE AGO, BUT...
...WHAT'S THIS, ALL OF A SUDDEN?
...I HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT THAT KIND OF STUFF...
MAYBE YOU HATED THE PERSON YOU WERE DOING IT WITH?
...BUT I WONDER...
DO I STILL WANT TO DO IT?

≪TSUBAKI SUGIURA≫

BIRTHDAY: DECEMBER 18TH

BLOOD TYPE: O

HEIGHT: 5' 8"

WEIGHT: 119 POUNDS

SHOE SIZE: 7.5

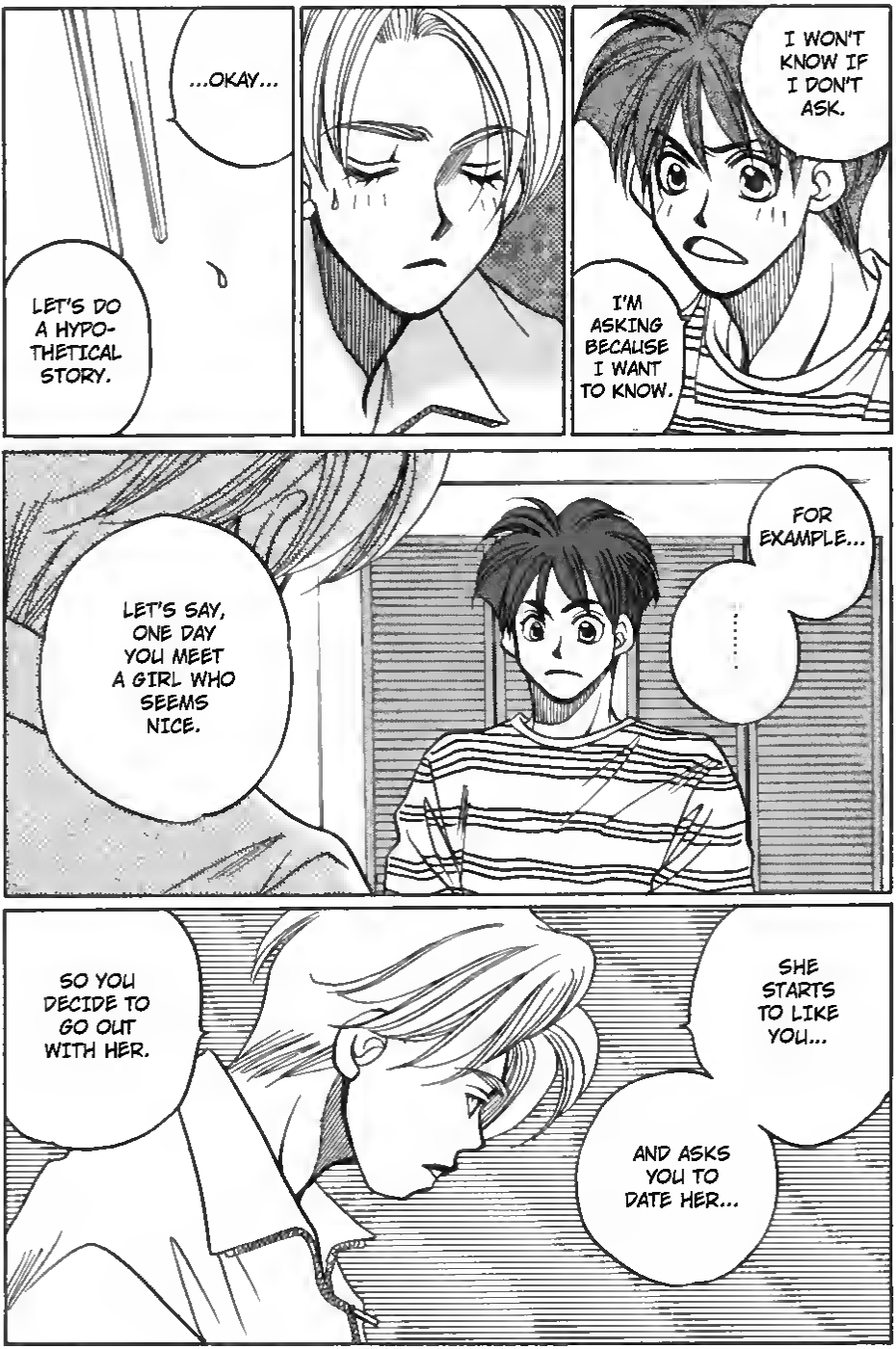
FAMILY: FATHER AND MOTHER

BIRTHPLACE: TAKASAKI IN GUNMA PREFECTURE

I DIDN'T ESPECIALLY LIKE HER, BUT WE GOT ALONG WELL...
ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER AND WE JUST ENDED UP HAVING SEX...
THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL!
SHE'S SOMEONE I GOT TO KNOW THROUGH A FRIEND OF A FRIEND...
.....
HAVE YOU EVER DONE IT WITH SOMEONE YOU HATED?!
IT HAS...
NOTHING TO DO WITH ME...
.....
THIS HAS TAKEN A TURN FOR THE WORST...

WHY? WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT?
...I HAVE NOTHING THAT I CAN TELL ANYONE...
YOU STARTED TALKING ALL ON YOUR OWN...
IT'S NOT FAIR ONLY ASKING ABOUT ME!
WHAT?! I WANNA KNOW! I WANNA KNOW!
I KNOW! YOU FOOL AROUND A LOT, RIGHT?
...NO...
QUITE THE OPPO-SITE.
WHAT? YOU'RE A VIRGIN?!
LISTEN,
CHISATO.
YOU MUST BE REALLY POPULAR!
YOU MUST HAVE HAD OVER 10... OVER 20 GIRLS...
YOU'RE MISSING A DIGIT.

IT'S BETTER IF YOU DON'T ASK THOSE PEOPLE ABOUT THEMSELVES.
OUT IN SOCIETY, THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE LIVING IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WORLD THAN YOU DO.
SO DON'T ASK ABOUT ME.
I LIVE IN A DIFFERENT WORLD THAN YOU DO.
...I'M ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
...WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHY CAN'T I ASK ABOUT YOU?
WHY DO I LIVE IN A DIFFERENT WORLD THAN YOU DO?


...OKAY...
LET'S DO A HYPO-THETICAL STORY.
I WON'T KNOW IF I DON'T ASK.
I'M ASKING BECAUSE I WANT TO KNOW.
FOR EXAMPLE...
.....
LET'S SAY, ONE DAY YOU MEET A GIRL WHO SEEMS NICE.
SHE STARTS TO LIKE YOU...
AND ASKS YOU TO DATE HER...
SO YOU DECIDE TO GO OUT WITH HER.

...FOR EXAMPLE...
HOWEVER, AFTER THAT, YOU FIND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT HER.
THAT GIRL HAD BEEN WITH HUNDREDS OF OTHER GUYS BEFORE YOU...
...LET'S SAY,
AND PERHAPS, SHE MIGHT EVEN HAVE A CHILD...
AND THE FIRST GUY SHE'D BEEN WITH WAS HER BROTHER-IN-LAW...
THEN WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
SHE TOLD YOU ALL THIS...
LET'S SAY...

TH...
THAT...
BE A PROBLEM...
THAT WOULD...
THAT'S WHAT I MEAN.
YOU'D THINK YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED, RIGHT?
EXACTLY.

BUT...
WELL, YOU KNOW...
AND JUST LOOKING AT THE OUTSIDE, THINKING SHE'S NICE FOR SOME REASON OR ANOTHER...
THAT CAN'T TRULY BE CALLED LOVE, RIGHT?
...WITHOUT KNOWING STUFF LIKE THAT ABOUT HER...
WOULD MEAN THAT SHE REALLY, TRULY LOVES ME, RIGHT?
THE FACT...
THAT SHE TOLD ME ALL THAT STUFF...

ISN'T THAT...
THE ULTIMATE CONFESSION OF LOVE?
...BUT...
YOU CAN'T REWARD SOMEONE FOR THAT, RIGHT?

...I DON'T KNOW, BUT...
I GUESS...
THAT'S TRUE...
...I...
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS.
YOU'RE NOT A BAD PERSON.
IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO EXPERIENCE THAT WAY OF LIFE...

KOUTAROU...
BUT...
...BUT...
LET'S SAY...
YOU WERE REALLY A CRIMINAL ON THE RUN FOR BANK ROBBERY...
WHAT!?
BUT EVEN THEN...
I...

AND WE MIGHT GET CAUGHT BY THE POLICE TOGETHER, HAND IN HAND...
...I MIGHT SAY, "THEN, LET'S RUN AWAY TOGETHER."
...か BLUSH
KOUTAROU, THERE'S JUST NO WAY...
I COULD HATE YOU...
NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF PERSON YOU ARE...
BECAUSE I...
CAN'T HELP IT
か BLUSH
H-
HUH?
WH- WHAT IS IT?
? ?
?

POOF!
"WHAT IS IT"!?
WELL... UM...
UM... I...
WAAH!?
WHY AM I REMEMBERING SOMETHING LIKE THAT RIGHT NOW?!
THIS IS BAD! I'M ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING REALLY BAD!
I...
WAAAH!?
SOME-BODY STOP ME!!
I LO-

ピンポーン
DING
DONG
……
GHATCHA
YES?
WHAT IS IT, AT THIS HOUR?
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
NHK BILL COLLECT-ION?
BA-DUM

I'M BACK, KOUTAROU!!
IT'S BEEN SO LONG!
HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?

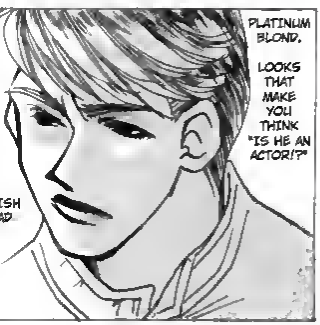
YEP!
I MOVED IN WITH A FRIEND JUST TODAY!
...TSUBAKI!!
YOU'RE BACK!?
SMOOCH
I MISSED YOU...

.....
.....
WHO'S THAT?
.....

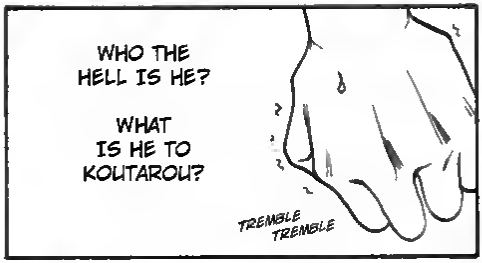
CHAPTER 20: SOMEONE TO KEEP AN EYE ON

AUTHOR'S NOTES:

I LIKE FORMULA 1.
OTHER THAN F1, I LIKE RACES AND SPORTS PROGRAMS FAIRLY WELL AND WATCH THEM OFTEN (ON TV), BUT F1 IS SPECIAL.
I AM IN LOVE WITH MIKA HAKKINEN.
A SIMPLE DESCRIPTION WOULD BE THAT HE IS A PRETTY-BOY DRIVER WHO STILL HASN'T WON A SINGLE RACE, YET CONTINUES TO BE CALLED A STRONG CONTENDER. A MAN WITH A SAD FATE.
WHEN THE CHAMPIONSHIP WAS WITHIN REACH, HIS ENGINE STARTED SMOKING AND THAT WAS THE END, BUT ANYWAY HE DRAMATICALLY MISSED OUT ON VICTORY. HE EVEN SUSTAINED A LIFE-THREATENING INJURY IN AN ACCIDENT... STORIES OF A HERO WHO WINS TIME AFTER TIME ARE NICE AND ALL, BUT STORIES OF A HERO WHO MISSES OUT ON WINNING TIME AFTER TIME ARE AMAZINGLY TOUCHING. SOMEDAY, I'M GOING TO USE HIM AS INSPIRATION AND WRITE A MANGA. BUT I WANT HIM TO BECOME A CHAMPION SOON.


A PLAYFUL CHARACTER WHOSE BLOOD TYPE IS B AND IS A LIBRA.
A FINNISH AIRHEAD.
PLATINUM BLOND.
LOOKS THAT MAKE YOU THINK "IS HE AN ACTOR!?"

↖ ACTUALLY, THE STORY IS ALREADY DONE (LAUGHS)


WHO THE HELL IS HE?
WHAT IS HE TO KOUTAROU?
TREMBLE TREMBLE

TO KISS AS SOON AS THEY MEET...
THEN OF COURSE THAT MEANS...
LISTEN, TSUBAKI...

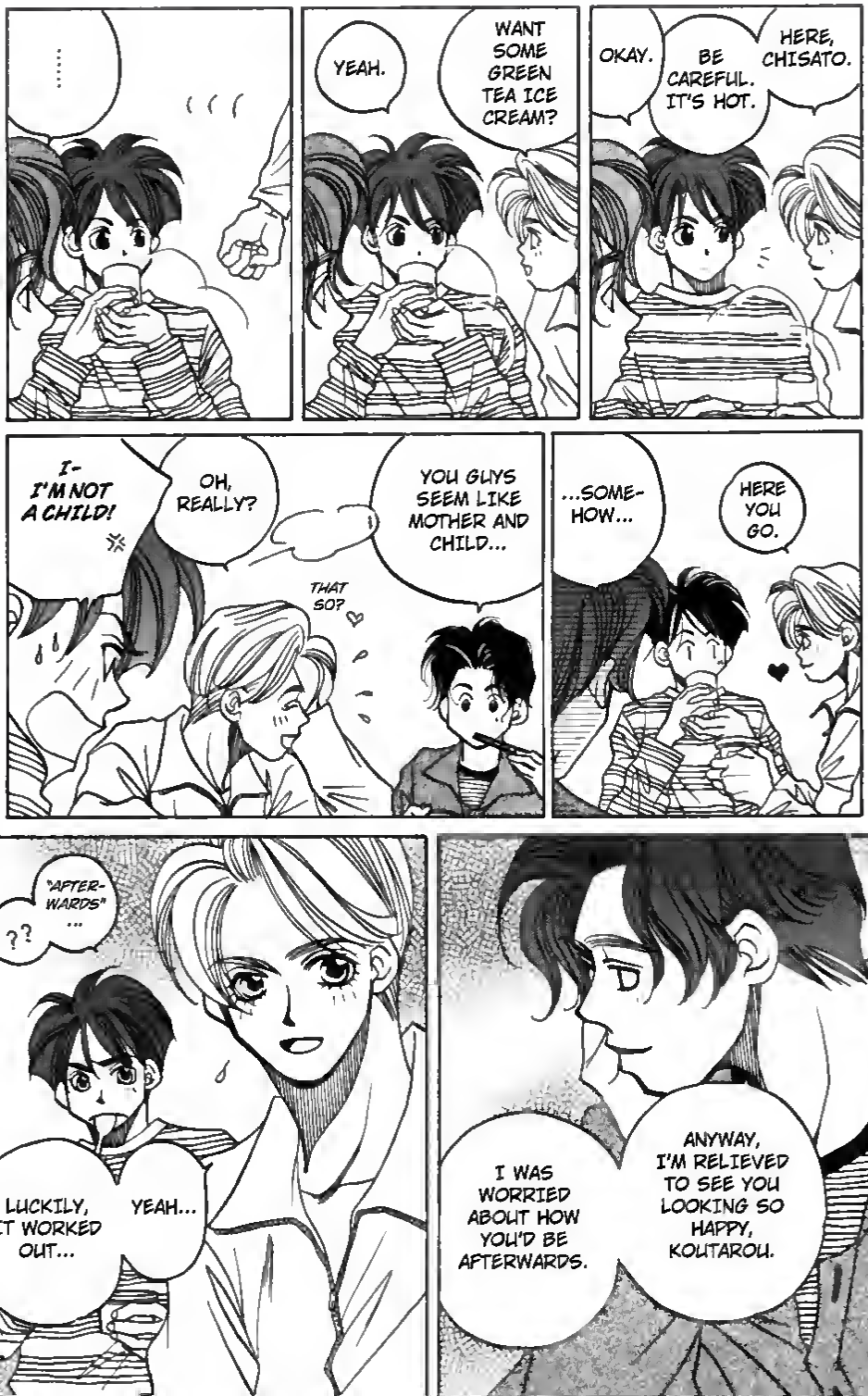
WE JUST HAPPEN TO BE... LIVING TOGETHER...
WE'RE NOT LOVERS!!
HE'S AN EXTREMELY ORDINARY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT!
...I JUST NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D BE LIVING WITH YOUR LOVER...
I'M SORRY!
PLEASE DON'T COME IN FROM OUT OF NOWHERE AND MESS THINGS ALL UP...
IT MATTERS!!
IT'S VITAL!!
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HE THINKS, RIGHT?
WELL THEN,
TURN
KOUTAROU, COULD IT POSSIBLY BE...
YOU HAVE A SECRET UNREQUITED LOVE FOR THIS KID?

WELL, HE'S EASY TO READ...
BLUSH
...かあ
.....
SAYING "AS IF YOU'RE A FRIEND," WHEN WE ACTUALLY ARE...
AND "WRONG IDEA" WHEN IT'S A FACT THAT WE'VE HAD SEX.
THAT'S A PROBLEMATIC STATEMENT, ISN'T IT?
A- ANYWAY...
PLEASE JUST BEHAVE AS IF YOU'RE A FRIEND.
IT'LL BE TROUBLE IF HE GETS THE WRONG IDEA.
HE'S AT A LOSS! HE'S AT A LOSS!
HEH!
.....
...SO YOU SEE...

HELLO! I'M TSUBAKI SUGIURA, KOUTAROU'S FRIEND.
SORRY FOR INTERRUPTING YOUR DINNER.
THIS IS MY FRIEND TSUBAKI SUGIURA.
.....
TWITCH
I LOVE MUSH-ROOMS! ♡
ISN'T IT? ♡
KOUTAROU'S COOKING IS REALLY DELICIOUS...
REALLY? THEN, I ACCEPT! ♡
WE'VE GOT HAMBURG STEAK WITH MUSHROOMS.
TSUBAKI, HAVE YOU EATEN YET? WANT SOMETHING?
OH, THAT'S RIGHT...

I'M GLAD.
BUT...
YOU KNOW...
HUH?
YOU'VE GOTTEN A WHOLE LOT MORE CHEERFUL, TSUBAKI.
YOU'RE ALMOST BURSTING WITH ENERGY.
THIS GUY...
EVEN KNOWS THE TASTE OF KOUTAROU'S FOOD!!
AND BEFORE I DID TOO!
SHOCK
I'M SAVING ON FOOD COSTS! YAY!
I TOLD YOU THAT I CAME TO TOKYO WITH A FRIEND, RIGHT?
LOOKS TASTY.
YEAH.
WELL, THAT FRIEND...
IS KAORU...
OH, THAT...
WELL, HOW CAN I PUT IT?
I THINK I WAS ORIGINALLY THIS WAY...
BUT I HAD JUST FORGOTTEN ABOUT IT FOR A LONG TIME.

...REALLY?
SO YOU MADE AMENDS.
HE'S THE ONE WHO CALLED OUT TO ME ON THE STREET...
AND MAYBE HE'S JUST FORGOTTEN, BUT... WHATEVER THE CASE...
I DON'T THINK THAT WHOLE EVENT WAS AS BIG A DEAL TO HIM AS I THOUGHT.
YEAH.
..."MADE AMENDS?" WELL...
THAT'S GREAT!
REALLY?
HEH HEH, THANKS.
...I'M FEELING LEFT OUT HERE...
I FEEL LIKE I'VE FINALLY REMOVED A THORN THAT'S BEEN STUCK IN ME...
FOR SO LONG...


……
YEAH.
WANT SOME GREEN TEA ICE CREAM?
OKAY.
BE CAREFUL. IT'S HOT.
HERE, CHISATO.
I- I'M NOT A CHILD!
OH, REALLY?
YOU GUYS SEEM LIKE MOTHER AND CHILD...
THAT SO?
...SOME-HOW...
HERE YOU GO.
"AFTER-WARDS" ...
??
LUCKILY, IT WORKED OUT...
YEAH...
I WAS WORRIED ABOUT HOW YOU'D BE AFTERWARDS.
ANYWAY, I'M RELIEVED TO SEE YOU LOOKING SO HAPPY, KOUTAROU.

SEE YOU LATER!
I'LL CALL SOME TIME SOON.
NO PROB-LEM.
THANKS. SORRY FOR INTER-RUPTING.
THANKS FOR DINNER.
IT WAS TASTY!
YEAH, SURE, BUT...
WHISPER
CAN WE MEET FOR A LITTLE BIT TOMORROW?
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT...
OH, TSUBAKI!
WH-WHAT?
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT? AM I IN THE WAY OR SOMETHING!?
WHY ARE THEY BEING SO SECRETIVE!!
GAH!
SEE YOU AT 3 PM..

ちゅっ!
SMOOCH!
.....
GOOD NIGHT AND SEE YOU TOMORROW!
'LATER!

TSUBAKI...
YOU'RE...
OFFEE & FRESH DONUTS
DOING THIS JUST FOR FUN, AREN'T YOU?
YES.
.....
IT'S ALRIGHT. IT WAS A CHANCE TO SEE HIS REACTION.
CHISATO WAS REALLY AWARE OF ME.
YOU SAID HE WAS STRAIGHT, BUT THERE ACTUALLY MIGHT BE SOME HOPE FOR YOUR LOVE AFTER ALL.
ANYONE WOULD BE AWARE OF YOU!! A GAY GUY SUDDENLY BARGING IN!!

"WHAT..."
YOU'RE IN LOVE, RIGHT? WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO?
PEACEFUL? YEAH, RIGHT!
PLEASE JUST LET IT BE. WE'VE BEEN SO PEACEFUL...
I GUESS SO.
SURELY YOU CAN. IF I WERE YOU, THEN I'D DO IT.
YOU CAN.
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN CONFESS MY LOVE.
MUNCH
I CAN DO, YOU KNOW?
THERE'S NOTHING...
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S ANOTHER PERSON'S PROBLEM OR MY OWN!
THEY SAY THE TRICK IS TO KEEP IT SHORT AND SWEET.
DON'T TAKE OTHER PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS SO LIGHTLY.
BUT THAT'S...
POUR POUR
OH, EXCUSE ME! MORE COFFEE PLEASE!
OKAY.
I'M PRETTY MANLY WHEN IT COMES TO THINGS LIKE THAT.
PANIC
WHAT...!?

I LOVE YOU, KOUTAROU.
.....
YOU'VE GONE THROUGH ABOUT 1000 PEOPLE. WHAT ARE YOU DRAGGING YOUR FEET ABOUT?
IT ISN'T 1000, IT'S 446.
THAT WAS ONLY OTHER PEOPLE HITTING ON ME...
IT DOESN'T MEAN I ASKED THEM MYSELF.
SEE? JUST LIKE THAT.
IT'S OVER IN AN INSTANT.
EASY AS PIE
SEEMS LIKE SHE TOTALLY GOT THE WRONG IDEA.
.....
CAN'T COME HERE ANYMORE
HEY, LISTEN! JUST NOW...
DOESN'T CARE

I'M FINE WITH HOW THINGS ARE NOW.
THE TRUTH IS...
I DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING.

IN THE END, HE HAS TO GO BACK HOME.
IT MIGHT BE BECAUSE I'M AROUND THAT HE'S GOOFING OFF.
TO TELL THE TRUTH, I WAS THINKING THAT IT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA FOR US TO LIVE TOGETHER MUCH LONGER.

I CAN'T GET ANY MORE INVOLVED THAN I AM...
I CAN'T DEFILE HIM.
HE'S TRULY INNOCENT...
HE'S LIVING A BEAUTIFUL LIFE...
I THINK, "IF ONLY I COULD LET HIM GROW UP THAT WAY..."

THAT MAY BE TRUE, BUT...
IT'S WHAT I REALLY... THINK...
.....
THAT'S A BEAUTIFUL THING TO SAY.
DON'T YOU WANT HIM?

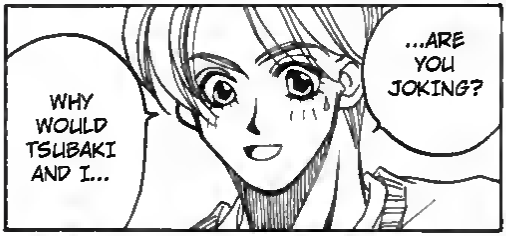
I DON'T EVEN KNOW...
WHAT I SHOULD DO ABOUT MY FEELINGS...
DON'T STIR THINGS UP...

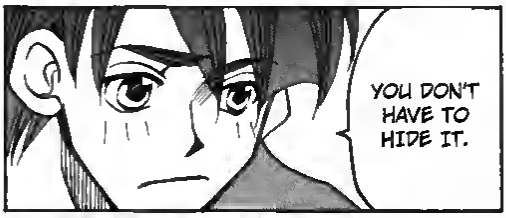
カチ
カチ
HE'S LATE!!
BUT, BUT... TSUBAKI WORRIES ME FOR SOME REASON!!
HEE HEE!
IS THAT SO?
I'M NOT A BAD GUY... I'M NOT SELFISH...
WHAT AM I GETTING MAD ABOUT?
I KNOW KOUTAROU KNOWS A LOT OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE, BUT...
I KNOW ...
HE ALWAYS USED TO COME HOME RIGHT AFTER CLASSES ENDED...
BUT THE MOMENT TSUBAKI APPEARS, THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS.

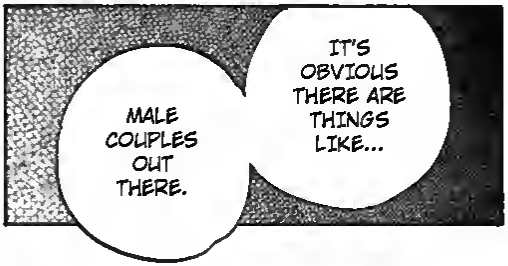
SOMEONE WHO KEEPS SECRETS WITH KOUTAROU...
SOMEONE WHO CALMLY KISSES KOUTAROU...
SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE TASTE OF KOUTAROU'S COOKING
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
JUST THINKING ABOUT IT MAKES MY CHEST HURT!!!
DING
DONG!
SOMEONE WHO GETS LET INTO "KOUTAROU'S WORLD"...
WHEN HE WON'T LET ME IN.

I'M HOME! SORRY I'M SO LATE!!
HERE! A PRESENT FOR YOU!
.....
Y-YEAH...
WITH TSUBAKI?
YEP.
...YOU WENT TO MISTER DONUT...
IS THERE SOME-THING WRONG WITH TSUBAKI?
WHAT IS IT?
.....

YOU AND TSUBAKI...
ARE LOVERS, RIGHT?


...ARE YOU JOKING?
WHY WOULD TSUBAKI AND I...


YOU DON'T HAVE TO HIDE IT.


IT'S OBVIOUS THERE ARE THINGS LIKE...
MALE COUPLES OUT THERE.

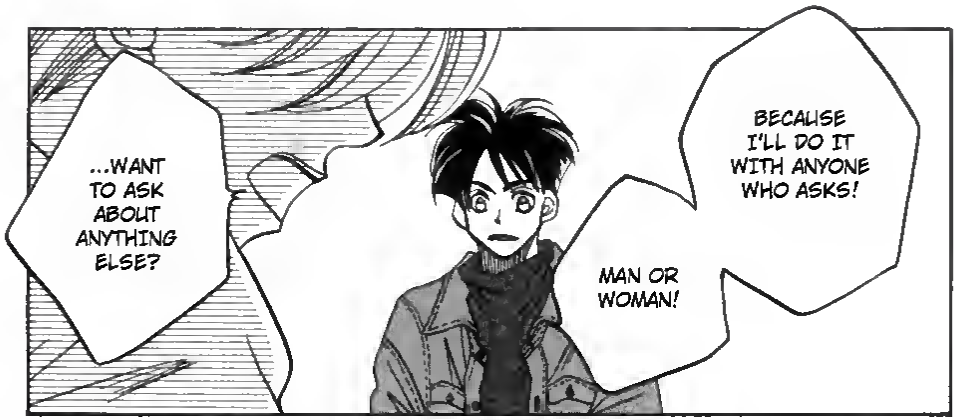
.....

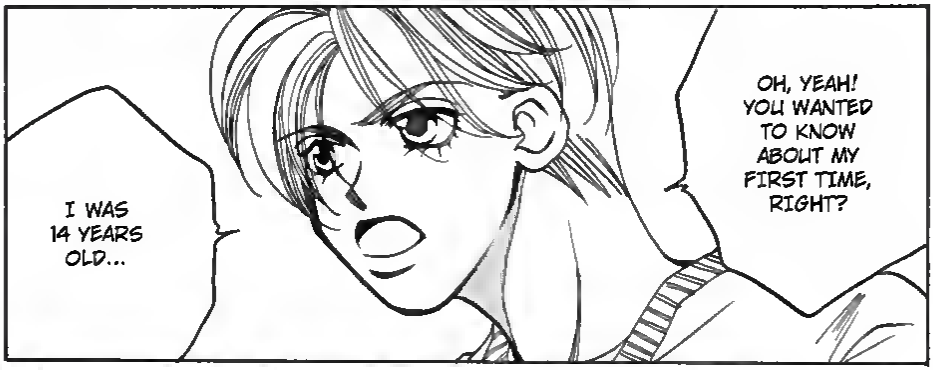
I TOLD YOU HE IS JUST A FRIEND, RIGHT?!
JUST A SECOND! DON'T COME TO CONCLUSIONS ALL BY YOURSELF!
JUST TELL ME HONESTLY.
I'LL BE ABLE TO COMPREHEND IT.
EVEN IF I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.
I...
UNDERSTAND NOW.
YOU WERE...
SIMPLY TREATING ME PROPERLY.

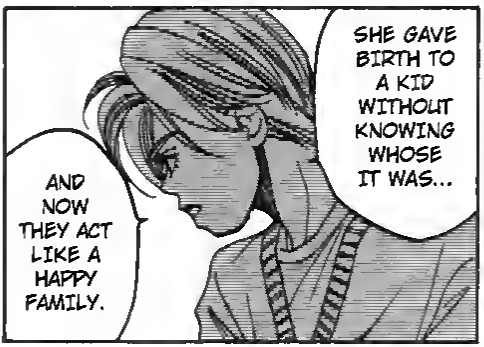
BUT SURELY YOU CAN AT LEAST DO THIS MUCH FOR ANYONE.
I WAS PUZZLED ABOUT...
WHY YOU ARE SO KIND TO ME...
...UH...
?
I'M JUST A KID THAT YOU HAPPENED TO MEET...
YOU'RE JUST KIND TO ME, BUT DON'T WANT ME TO KNOW TOO MUCH.
SNAP

WHY DO YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, HAVE TO TELL ME THAT!?
SURE, I'M A GUY WHO ACTS LIKE A GOOD PERSON AND TREATS OTHERS PROPERLY, BUT...
...WHY DO YOU...
HAVE TO TELL ME SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
...UNTIL I MET YOU...
...UNTIL I MET TSUBAKI, I HAD NEVER LET ANYONE INTO MY ROOM...
YOU THINK THIS IS SOMETHING I COULD DO FOR ANYONE?!
I HAD NEVER EVEN CONSIDERED LIVING WITH SOMEONE ELSE.
UNTIL I MET YOU,

WANT TO ASK ABOUT WHETHER WE DID IT OR NOT?!
I SAID HE'S A FRIEND AND HE IS!
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?! ABOUT TSUBAKI?
WE DID!
BUT WHAT DOES IT MATTER THAT WE DID?
TSUBAKI IS THE 446TH PERSON!


...WANT TO ASK ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE?
MAN OR WOMAN!
BECAUSE I'LL DO IT WITH ANYONE WHO ASKS!

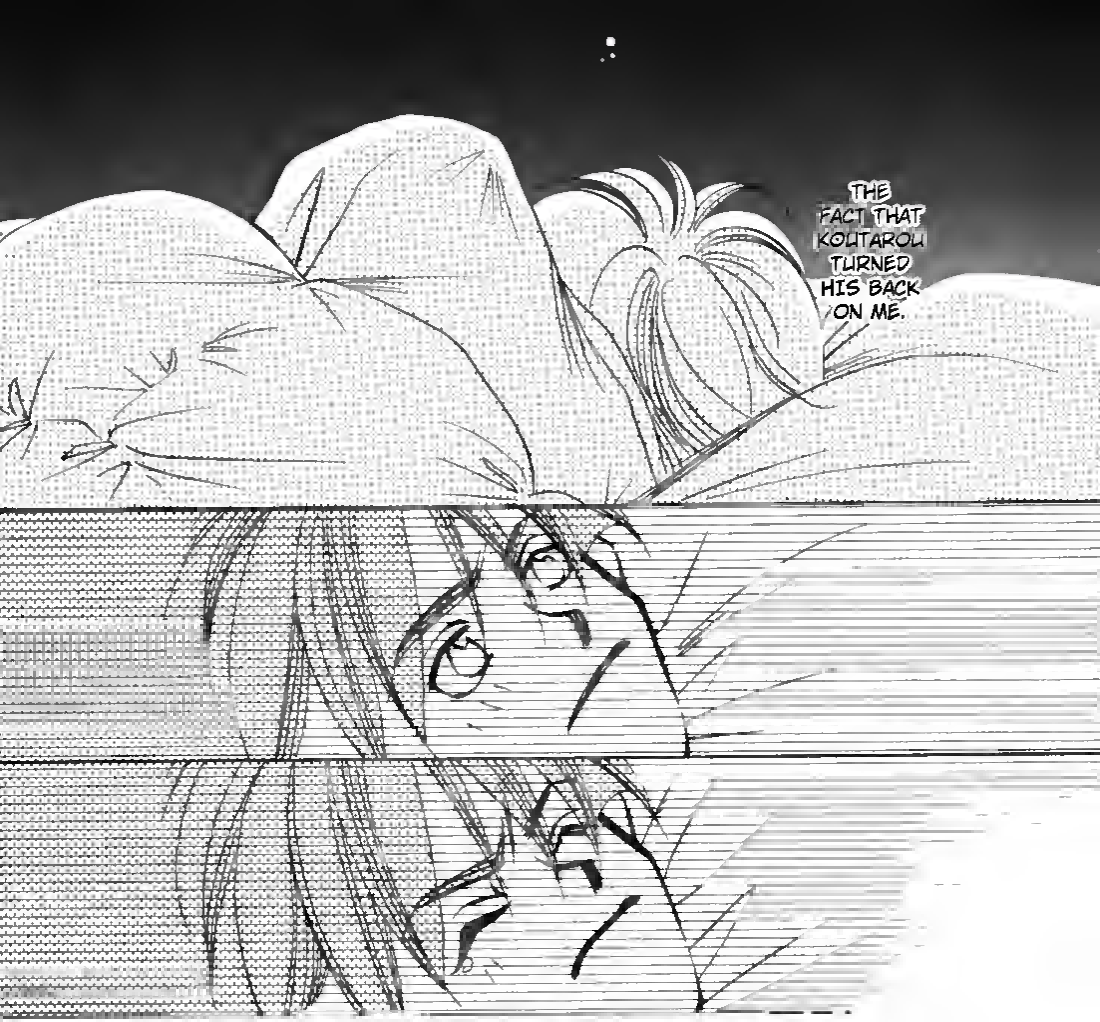

I WAS 14 YEARS OLD...
OH, YEAH! YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT MY FIRST TIME, RIGHT?


AND NOW THEY ACT LIKE A HAPPY FAMILY.
SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A KID WITHOUT KNOWING WHOSE IT WAS...

AND IT WAS WITH MY BROTHER'S FIANCÉE!

I STILL HAVE SO MANY STORIES...
THAT WOULD FRIGHTEN YOU IF YOU HEARD THEM.
...AND THERE'S STILL MORE.
IF YOU'RE AT LEAST FRIGHTENED...
THEN HURRY AND...
GO HOME...

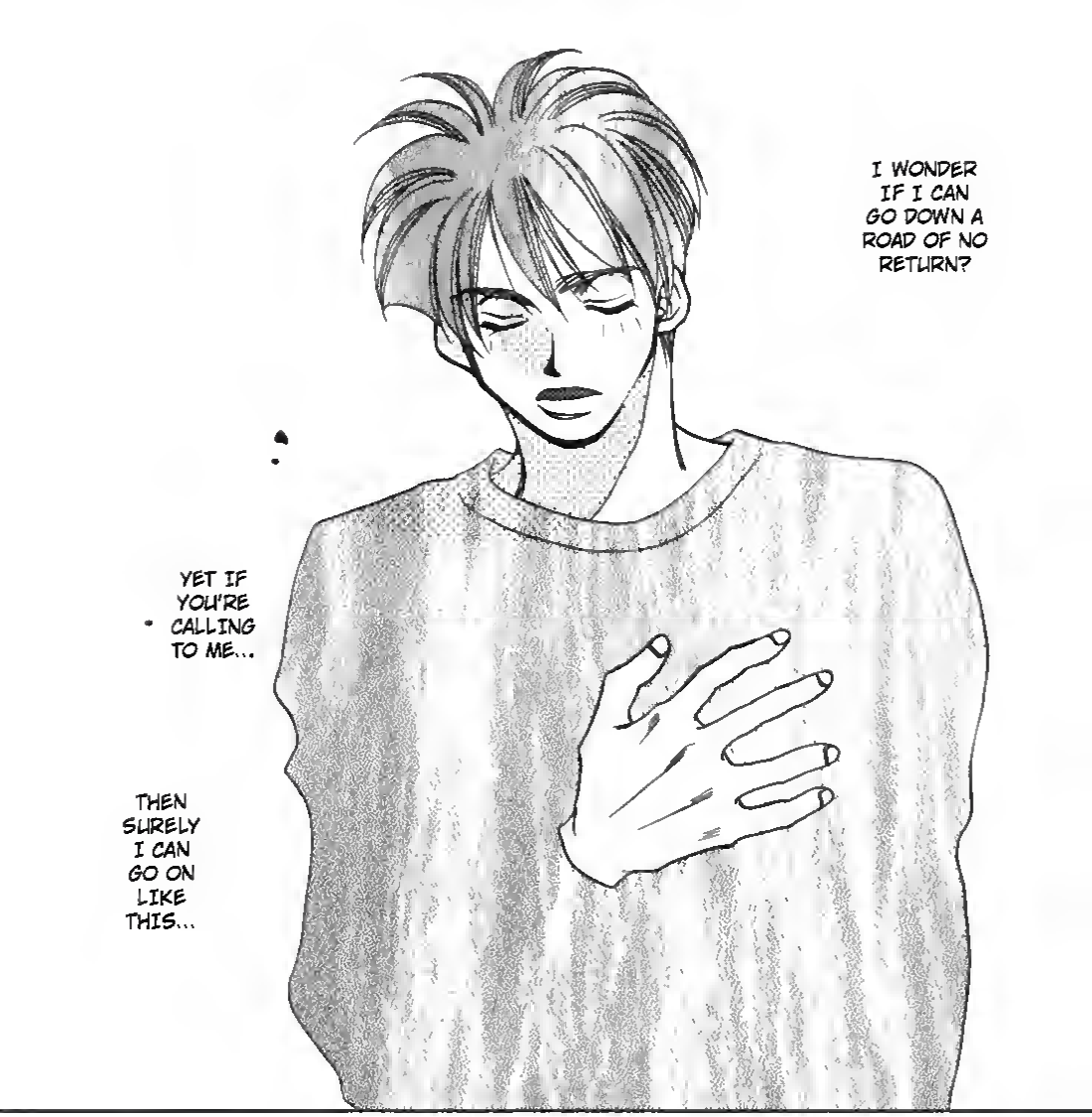
THE PART ABOUT TSUBAKI?
HIS NUMBER OF PARTNERS? THE PART ABOUT HIS FIRST TIME?
THE PART ABOUT THE CHILD?
BEING TOLD TO "GO HOME"?
I'M NOT SURE...
WHAT WAS THE MOST SHOCKING.


THE FACT THAT KOUTAROU TURNED HIS BACK ON ME.
I WAS JUST...
DESPERATELY TRYING TO WITHSTAND...
THE PAIN THAT FELT LIKE A CHASM HAD OPENED DEEP IN MY CHEST...

R...
CLATTER
.....
HELLO, TAKAMURA RESIDENCE.
RRRRRRRRRRRR
OH, CHISATO?
IT'S TSUBAKI.

KOUTAROU... ALREADY LEFT FOR SCHOOL...
UH, YEAH.
I THOUGHT SO. THAT'S WHY I CALLED.
YOU'VE GOT SOME TIME, RIGHT?
WANNA HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER?
IT'S MY TREAT.

CHAPTER 21: HAVE YOU EVER CHANGED SOMEONE'S LIFE?



AUTHOR'S NOTES.

WHEN I COMMENTED THAT "AFTER WRITING *DOUSEI AI*, THE AGE RANGE OF MY READERS DROPPED QUICKLY," I RECEIVED MANY QUESTIONS LIKE, "WHAT IS THE AGE RANGE OF YOUR READERS?" IN REALITY, IT SEEMS LIKE THE MAJORITY ARE MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, FOLLOWED BY PEOPLE IN THEIR 20s. THE YOUNGEST ARE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, AND THE OLDEST ARE IN THE HOUSEWIFE CATEGORY. (I READ THINGS LIKE, "I'M READING IT TOGETHER WITH MY DAUGHTER" OR "I STARTED READING AFTER MY MOTHER RECOMMENDED IT," AND I THINK THAT'S SO AWESOME! I'M SO HAPPY.)

LONG AGO, I WOULD SELDOM RECEIVE LETTERS FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS. I'M REALLY GLAD THAT THE AGE RANGE IS WIDENING.

YOU HAD A FIGHT?
WHAT?!
KOUTAROU'S SUCH A HANDFUL.
EVEN THOUGH HE'S USUALLY KIND...
HE HAS AN UNEXPECTEDLY SHORT TEMPER. THAT'S THE TYPE OF GUY HE IS.
...UH HUH...
...BUT...
I THOUGHT, "WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO EAT LUNCH WITH TSUBAKI?"...
I STILL CAME...
HE'S TREATING...
AND IT'S FOOD...

IF IT'S ONLY THE FACE, THEN KOUTAROU'S IS MORE FEMININE.
IT'S NOT BECAUSE OF HIS GIRLY FACE...
BUT HE'S STRANGELY CUTE... OR RATHER, SEXY...
OVERALL, HE'S KIND OF CHARMING, HUH?
WAS IT ME?
IT WAS YOU.
WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR THE FIGHT?
I'M SORRY FOR CAUSING AN UPROAR.
OH, SO THAT WAS IT, HUH?

BUT IT DOES HAVE TO DO WITH YOU, RIGHT?
.....
HM?
EVEN THOUGH IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME...
EVEN THOUGH IT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...
YOU'VE HAD...
SEXUAL RELATIONS, RIGHT?
THAT'S RIGHT.
...WE DID...

CHUCKLE
IS IT WRONG THAT WE DID?
SLURP
GRRRR
...IT WAS BECAUSE...
AT THAT TIME, I WANTED TO MAKE LOVE TO HIM...
AND I THINK HE WANTED THAT TOO...
SO WE SLEPT TOGETHER.
AND THEN...
AFTER THAT ONE NIGHT OF MAKING LOVE...
I KNEW...

THAT I CAN BE FRIENDS WITH THIS PERSON.
.....
WHO KNOWS?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS.
SINCE BOTH KOUTAROU AND I CAN'T STAND BEING ALONE...
IF WE BOTH CONTINUE TO BE ALONE, THEN WE MIGHT SLEEP TOGETHER AGAIN.
...SO...
YOU WON'T EVER DO IT AGAIN?

.....
CLICK
THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW THINGS WILL END UP.
THAT'S RIGHT, BUT...
...BUT YOU SAID YOU WERE FRIENDS...
GRRR
KOUTAROU'S ENTIRE STORY, RIGHT?
...YOU HEARD...
DO YOU HATE HIM NOW?

I THINK I WOULD HATE AND DESPISE THEM...
...IF IT WERE ANYONE BUT KOUTAROU...
I DON'T KNOW...
WHAT I SHOULD DO...
BUT,
IT'S KOUTAROU, SO...

YOU'RE PURE, HUH?
BUT, IN A DIFFERENT SENSE...
KOUTAROU IS MORE PURE THAN YOU.
THAT'S THE TYPE OF GUY HE IS...
UNTIL VERY RECENTLY HE WAS BROKEN...
...AND HE MIGHT BREAK DOWN AGAIN IN THE FUTURE.

I WAS SURPRISED WHEN I SAW KOUTAROU AGAIN...
AFTER SO LONG.
...AT ANY RATE...
SURELY IT'S BECAUSE HE MET YOU, HUH?
HE WAS BRIGHT AND SHINING... LIKE A DIFFERENT PERSON.

IF I COULD, I'D WANT TO CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE.
I ENVY YOU.
IF I COULD MAKE IT BETTER...
IF I COULD DO THAT...
JUST BY BEING THERE...

WELL, I GOTTA RUN.
SAY HI TO KOUTAROU FOR ME.
TSUBAKI!

I...
DON'T WANT TO LOSE TO YOU!
LUCKILY, NOW I UNDERSTAND FULLY...
WHY I FEEL SO FRUSTRATED.

THANK YOU FOR LUNCH!
GOOD-BYE!
BOW
IT HURTS SO MUCH I CAN'T BREATH.
THERE'S A BIG KNOT IN MY STOMACH.

TOWARDS ONLY ONE THING...
AND YET, MY FEET TRY TO CONTINUE MOVING FORWARD...

I AM IN LOVE...
WITH KOUTAROU.
I DON'T KNOW...
I DON'T KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT A GUY LOVING ANOTHER GUY IS NORMAL, OR AT WHAT POINT IT BECOMES ABNORMAL, BUT...
I DON'T WANT ANYONE ELSE TO TAKE KOUTAROU AWAY FROM ME.

AH, MAN...
GOING HOME IS GONNA BE TOUGH...
I DIDN'T EVEN SAY ANYTHING THIS MORNING WHEN I LEFT...
I SHOULD START BY SAYING, "I'M HOME," LIKE USUAL..

I WANT KOUTAROU!

I-
I'M
HOME.
……
ガチャ
GATCHA
WELCOME
BACK!
ぴょん
BOING
YOU
LIKE
THAT,
RIGHT?
UH…
MAPO
TOFU.
WHAT'S
FOR DINNER
TODAY?
……

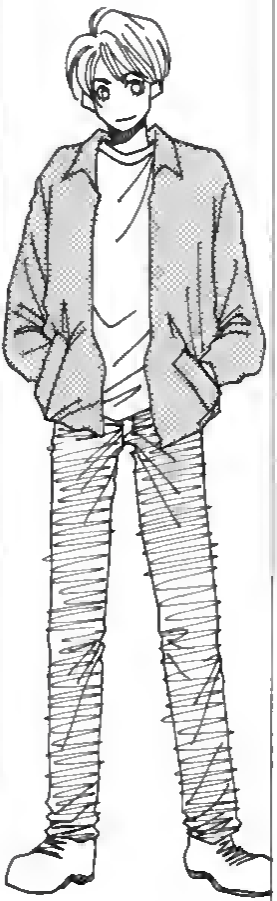
YEP.
I LIKE IT A LOT.
THERE'S NOTHING FOR YOU TO APOLOGIZE FOR...
.....
KOUTAROU...
I'M SORRY ABOUT LAST NIGHT.

BUT I'M FINE NOW.
LAST NIGHT...
SHOCKED ME A BIT...
I'LL DEFINITELY LEAVE ON MY OWN.
...IF I EVER WANT TO LEAVE...
UNTIL THEN, WILL YOU LET ME STAY WITH YOU A LITTLE LONGER?

OKAY.
AND IF I EVER START TO HATE YOU, I'LL THROW YOU OUT, EVEN IF I HAVE TO USE FORCE.
DO WHAT YOU WANT.
.....
TODAY, I HAD LUNCH WITH TSUBAKI.
TSUBAKI IS A GOOD GUY, HUH?
WHAT?

I WONDER IF HE SAID SOMETHING WEIRD AGAIN...
...YEAH... HE IS...
I WONDER IF I GOT A LITTLE TOO INVOLVED...
OH, MAN.
I'LL LET IT BE FOR NOW.
KA-CLUNK

OH, KAORU, WELCOME HOME.
...YOU'RE HERE!
I BOUGHT SOME STUFF AT THE SUPERMARKET. WANNA EAT SOMETHING?
IT'S ONLY INSTANT RAMEN THOUGH.
SURE.
WHAT GIRL-FRIEND?
CLICK
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO SEE YOUR GIRLFRIEND TODAY?
WHICH SHOULD I TAKE? OH, THERE'S FRIED NOODLES TOO.
RUMMAGE



≪ KOUTAROU TAKAMURA ≫

BIRTHDAY: FEBRUARY 29TH

BLOOD TYPE: B

HEIGHT: 5' 10"

WEIGHT: 132 POUNDS

SHOE SIZE: 8

FAMILY: FATHER AND OLDER BROTHER

BIRTHPLACE: YOKOHAMA IN KANAGAWA PREFECTURE

THE ONE YOU RAN OUT TO SEE AS SOON AS WE GOT TO TOKYO.
CLINK
CLINK
SHE'S YOUR GIRLFRIEND, RIGHT?
OH, THAT.
THAT?
NO, THAT'S A FRIEND.
HE'S A GUY!
...OH...
REALLY?
WELL, YOU ALWAYS SEEM TO BE GOING TO MEET EACH OTHER...
SO I THOUGHT IT MUST BE SOMEONE YOU REALLY LIKED.
AH HA HA! LIKING IS LIKING, BUT...
THERE ARE ALL TYPES OF LIKE, RIGHT?

"ALL TYPES..."
"LOVE OR JUST LIKE..."
"IT'S LOVE."

TWEEEE-

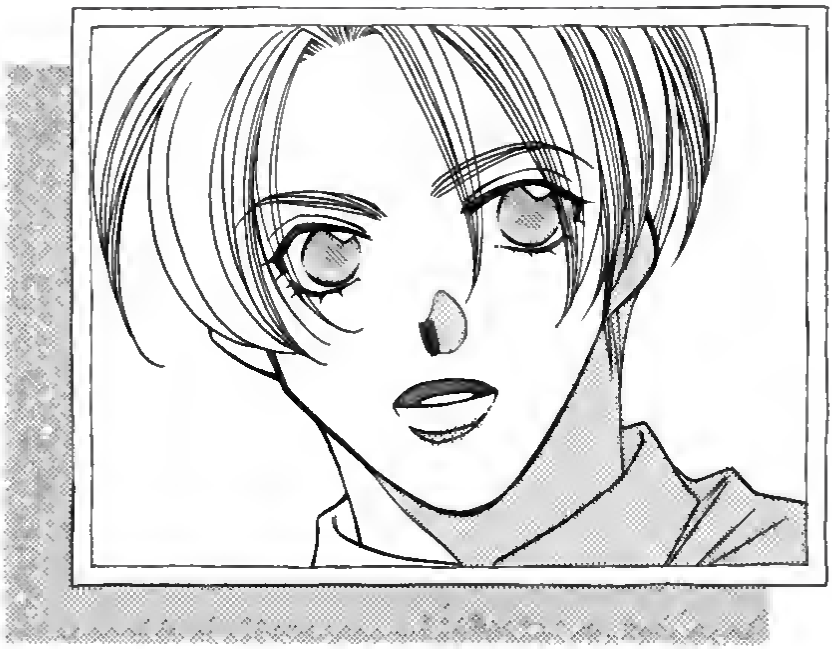
...THE WATER...
IS BOILING...
CLICK
OH...
UH...

WHAT'S WITH HIM RANDOMLY CALLING UP CHISATO?
WHAT DID THEY TALK ABOUT?
TSUBAKI... THAT JERK...

DAMN IT, TSUBAKI! NEXT TIME I SEE YOU...
SOMEHOW IT MAKES MY HEART POUND EVEN HARDER...
SOMEHOW I FEEL LIKE CHISATO'S LOOKS HAVE CHANGED...

...WHAT!?
SQUEEZE

BA-DUM
BA-DUM
BA-DUM



CHAPTER 22: GOING ON FOOT

AUTHOR'S NOTES:

ONCE IN A WHILE, I GET ASKED ABOUT MY DRAWING MATERIALS, SO I'LL TALK ABOUT THAT.

I USE A MAPPING PEN. (I USE A ROTRING 0.18 FOR BACKGROUNDS AND A RULING PEN FOR GRIDLINES.)
I USE ART COLOR BRAND "LINE & SOLID" OR "MANGA INK".
I USE ART COLOR BRAND 135KG PAPER
FOR THE ROUGH DRAWINGS, I USE AN HB MECHANICAL PENCIL.
FOR COLORING, I USE DR. PH. MARTIN'S INK, THEN HOLBEIN
JUST FOR THE OUTLINE. I USE BB KENT PAPER WITH ROUGH EDGES, HOWEVER... RECENTLY THE QUALITY HAS SUDDENLY GOTTEN WORSE... OR SO IT SEEMS...
HUH? YOU SAY I'M BLAMING THE PAPER FOR MY OWN MISTAKES? UM...

THUD!
SHOVE!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?! YOU IDIOT!
JUST WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO?!
"WHAT AM I TRYING TO DO.."
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?
DON'T PRETEND LIKE YOU DON'T KNOW...
EVEN THOUGH YOU DO...

DON'T ACT ALL HIGH AND MIGHTY NOW...
WHEN YOU'VE SECRETLY DONE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE!
STAND
すくっ

KOUTAROU!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
STEP すたすた STEP
KOUTAROU!!
KOUTAROU!!
バーン!!
SLAM!

DAMN IT, THAT JERK CHISATO...
SUDDENLY ACTING ALL GROWN UP EVEN THOUGH HE'S A KID.
I'M BAD AT BEING TAKEN FROM BEHIND...
AND I FELT HIM TOO, DAMMIT.
IT'S EMBARRASSING. IT'S SO STUPID.
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
...HE WAS ACTING LIKE A MAN...
IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO GO BACK SO SOON...
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
BUT IF I WANT TO WASTE TIME THIS LATE AT NIGHT...
I RAN AWAY...

ABOUT 5 MINUTES BY TRAIN...
MEIDAIMAE
DAITABASHI
SASAZUKA
HATAGAYA
HATSUDAI
...BUT THE TRAINS HAVE ALREADY STOPPED...
I'M SURE TSUBAKI SAID...
HIS PLACE WAS AT MEIDAIMAE.
THEN SHALL I TRY...
GOING ON FOOT?

≪CHISATO KANEMAKI≫

BIRTHDAY: JANUARY 31ST

BLOOD TYPE: A

HEIGHT: 5' 11"

WEIGHT: 143 POUNDS

SHOE SIZE: 9

FAMILY: FATHER, MOTHER, AND YOUNGER BROTHER

BIRTHPLACE: OOTA, TOKYO

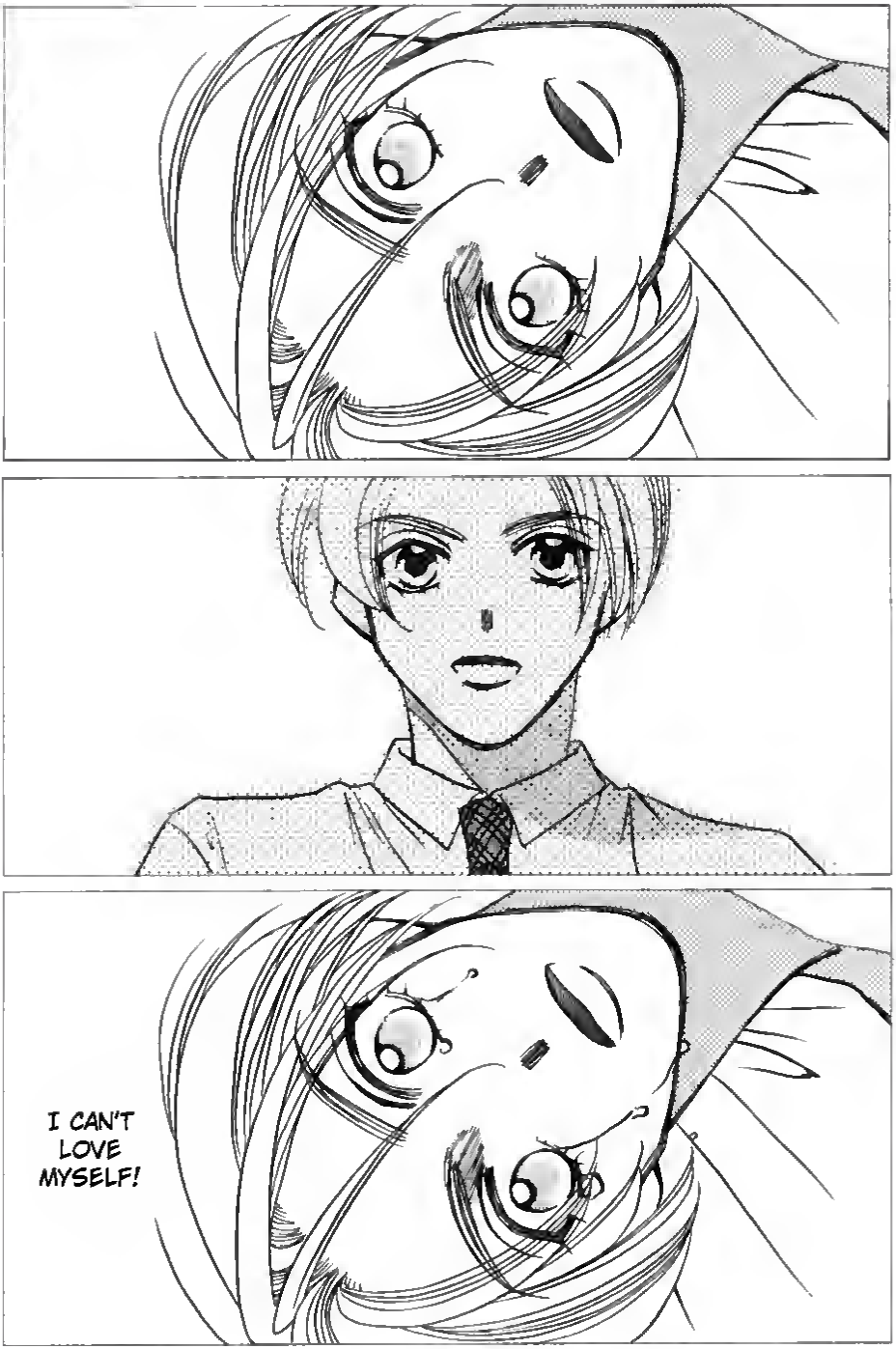
HATED...
.....
SUDDENLY, I REMEMBER SOMETHING STRANGE.
NOW THAT I'M ALONE...
IT WAS AROUND THE TIME I HAD FIRST STARTED GETTING INVOLVED WITH GUYS.
I WAS 16.
THE PLACE WAS YOKOSUKA.
FOR SOME REASON, I REMEMBERED THE WORST SEX I'D EVER HAD.

AND THEN...
I HAD JUST BEEN PICKED UP BY AN AMERICAN SOLDIER.
HE BROUGHT ME TO A HOTEL ROOM WHERE THREE OF HIS BUDDIES WERE WAITING.
I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE AGAINST THEM EVEN IF I RESISTED.
SO INSTEAD OF HAVING TO GO THROUGH SOMETHING HUMILIATING LIKE BEING RAPED...
"THIS IS BAD."
THAT'S CERTAINLY WHAT I THOUGHT AT THE TIME...
IT PAID TO FLATTER THEM AND BE LOVED IN RETURN...

I DIDN'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO BE HATED, EVEN THOUGH I WAS A BAD GUY.
PRETENDING TO BE A GOOD CHILD AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL...
THIS WAS A WARNING TO MYSELF.
EVEN IF YOU TRY TO SMOOTH THINGS OVER, YOU'RE STILL A DIRTY PERSON.
DON'T FORGET...

SMILING AT MY TEACHERS, FRIENDS, AND FAMILY... BEING FRIENDLY TO EVERYONE...
WHAT WAS I WORKING FOR? WHAT WAS I WORKING SO HARD FOR?
WHO DO I WANT ACCEPTANCE FROM?!
AM I HAPPY? WHO THE HELL AM I DOING IT FOR?!
WHO DO I WANT TO LOVE ME?!

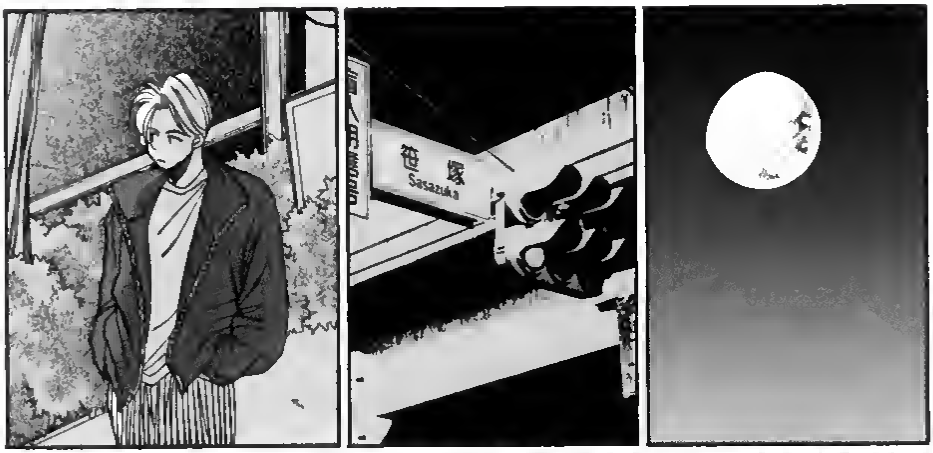
...MYSELF?

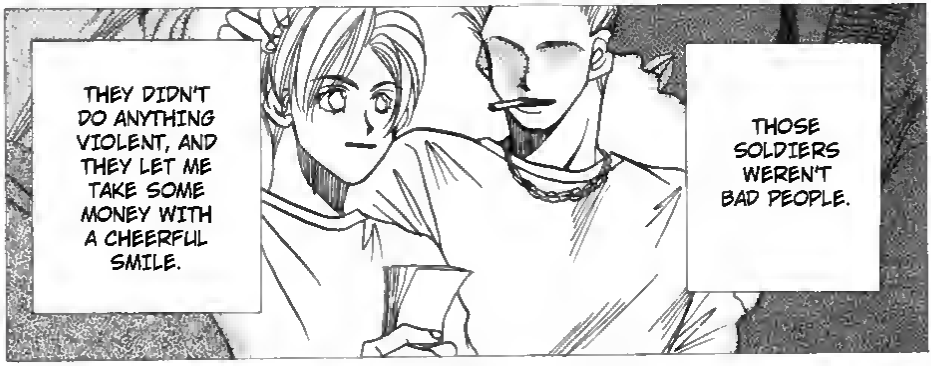

I CAN'T LOVE MYSELF!

SOMEONE, HELP ME!!
HE'S STILL NOT BACK YET...
.....

I REALLY MEANT IT.
I SAID SOMETHING HARSH, BUT...
KOUTAROU...
DO YOU HATE ME NOW?
KOUTAROU, I TOLD THE TRUTH.
BECAUSE THOSE ARE MY TRUE FEELINGS...
WANTED YOU TO SEE ME BE HARSH.
BUT I...
IF YOU DO, THEN THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.

KOUTAROU CAN ONLY LOVE CLEAN PEOPLE?
BUT SO WHAT? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE DIRTY?
HIS BODY IS DIRTY.
IT'S BEEN TAINTED. THAT'S WHAT I THINK.
I...
KOUTAROU...
I...
AM IN LOVE WITH KOUTAROU...
I LOVE YOU.
...KOUTAROU!


笹塚
Sasazuka


THEY DIDN'T DO ANYTHING VIOLENT, AND THEY LET ME TAKE SOME MONEY WITH A CHEERFUL SMILE.
THOSE SOLDIERS WEREN'T BAD PEOPLE.

MY DIRTY HEART TAINTED MY BODY...
AND EVEN TAINTED MY BLOOD.
BUT IT'S MY OWN FAULT THAT MY HEART IS DIRTY.

IT WAS JUST THAT MY FIRST TIME TAKING DRUGS WAS VERY HARD ON ME...
MY HEAD WAS SPINNING AND I THREW UP ON THE WAY HOME.

"YOU'RE A KIND PERSON."
"YOU'LL DO IT FOR ANYONE, RIGHT?"
"GO OUT WITH ME!"
"I CAN'T LET YOU GO LIKE THIS!"
"YOU LOVE PEOPLE, HUH?"

EVERYONE IS GOOD AND KIND.
EVEN SO, NO ONE SCOLDED ME.
I WAS THE ONLY BAD GUY.
MY INNER SELF'S EVIL WAYS CONTINUED BECAUSE IT WANTED ME TO BE CRITICIZED.
MY OUTER SELF CONTINUED TO TRY ITS BEST BECAUSE IT WANTED TO BE LIKED BY ME.
NO ONE CRITICIZED ME.

I WANTED
TO BE INSULTED
BY SOMEONE.
I WANTED
TO BE INSULTED
AND CRY.

"DON'T PRETEND TO BE ALL HIGH AND MIGHTY NOW...
EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE SECRETLY DONE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE!"

SO, I WAS INSULTED.

I WAS INSULTED BY MY FIRST LOVE...

PPPP...

MEIDAIMAE STATION
KOUTAROU.
WHAT'S WRONG?
DID YOU WALK HERE? FROM HATSUDAI?
.....

I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO HAVE SEX WITH THE PERSON I LOVE.
TSUBAKI,
I'M NO GOOD.

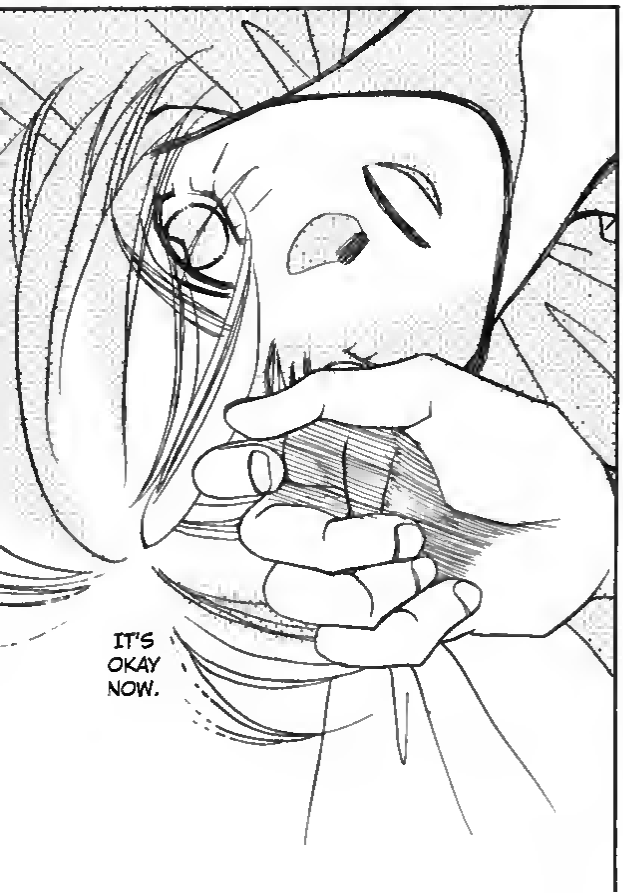
I CAN'T DO IT.
I CAN'T SHOW...
MY DIRTY SELF TO THE ONE I LOVE.
EVEN THOUGH I'M TRYING MY BEST...
I DON'T WANT TO BE HATED.
EVEN THOUGH I'M TRYING MY BEST NOT TO BE HATED...
I WANT TO BE LOVED...
EVEN THOUGH I'M TRYING MY BEST EACH AND EVERY DAY...

I'M FINE WITH THAT.
SO WHAT IF YOU'RE DIRTY?
IT'S FINE.
DON'T CRY.
NO MATTER HOW DIRTY YOU ARE...
YOU AND I ARE FRIENDS.
...DON'T CRY...
...BUT IT'S OKAY...
...IF YOU DO...

IT SOUNDED LIKE SOMEONE CAME IN LAST NIGHT...
WAS IT YOUR FRIEND?
OKAY.
WELL, I'M OFF.
HE'S SLEEPING ON MY FUTON NOW.
DID WE WAKE YOU?
OH, YEAH. SORRY.
NO...
JOB INTERVIEW, RIGHT?
YEAH.
I'LL BE BACK LATER.

KA-CHUNK
TSUBAKI'S ROOM?
THAT'S RIGHT. I JUST FELL ASLEEP HERE.
I REALLY IMPOSED ON HIM, HUH?

I WAS INSULTED BY THE GUY I LOVE, THEN I CRIED.

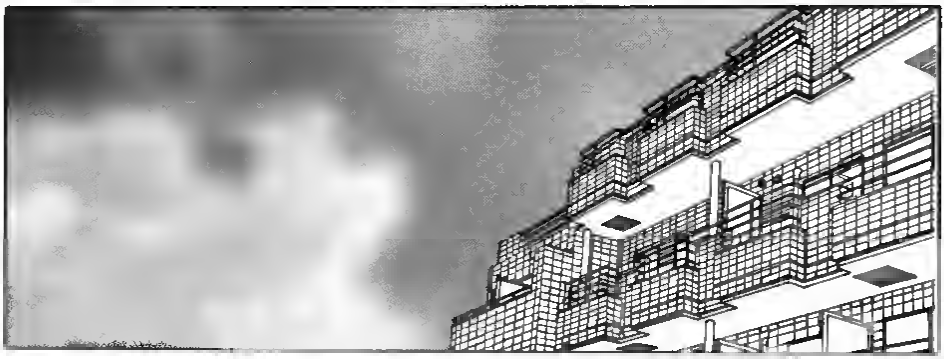

IT'S OKAY NOW.

WITH THIS...
MY INNER AND OUTER SELVES ARE FINALLY ONE.

I HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR...
ANYMORE.
HURRY, KOUTAROU!
HOWEVER, AT THE SAME TIME, A HEART-BROKEN CHISATO IS PREPARING TO LEAVE.
le coq sportif

水城せとな
setona mizushiro
同棲愛
どうせいあい
DOUSEI AI
LOVE UNDER ONE ROOF
CHAPTER 23: SECOND VIRGIN

IT'S PAINFUL TO HAVE SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT TO LOSE, HUH?
BUT I'M HAPPY...



BAM!
I'M HOME, CHISATO!
.....
WHAT ELSE?
I WAS JUST ABOUT TO GO BACK HOME.
WHAT'S WITH THE BAGS?

GOOD BYE.
BOW
I'M SORRY FOR IMPOSING ON YOU FOR SO LONG.
WELL,
GRAB!
カバン!
YOU DIDN'T TELL ME!
YOU CAN'T!! YOU CAN'T GO HOME!!
YOU CAN'T GO HOME!!

LOOK! I ALREADY BOUGHT ALL THE INGREDIENTS FOR DINNER!!
TONIGHT IS STUFFED CABBAGE AND MACARONI SALAD!!
WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK I'M MAKING IT FOR?!
...OKAY.
I'LL GO HOME...
TOMORROW...

CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
LAST NIGHT...
WHERE DID YOU STAY?
TSUBAKI'S PLACE.
I THOUGHT SO.

.....
WELL, WE DID SLEEP ON THE SAME FUTON, BUT...
THAT WAS BECAUSE HE DIDN'T HAVE A SPARE ONE, BUT...
DON'T GET ANY WEIRD IDEAS!
I KNOW THAT.
YOU'RE FRIENDS, RIGHT?
WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING INDECENT, OKAY?!
.....
.....

...!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
I HAVEN'T DECIDED.
CHOP
CHOP
SO...
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT SCHOOL?
CHOP
THEN WHY DID YOU SAY YOU'RE GOING HOME?!
THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS!
THAT'S NOT THE ONLY REASON...
I'VE BEEN STAYING HERE!

BECAUSE TOMORROW I'M GOING HOME...
AND I DON'T CARE IF YOU HATE ME!
TODAY, I'LL SAY EVERYTHING PLAINLY!
BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING HOME TOMORROW, RIGHT?!
THEN I'LL SAY ANYTHING I WANT TODAY TOO!
WHAT THE...
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU THINK...
AND BECAUSE I'M NOT AFRAID ANYMORE!

SLURP
SLURP
I WONDER IF THEY'RE GETTING ALONG...
THOSE TWO ARE THE TYPE THAT CAN ONLY HAVE AN HONEST FIGHT, HUH?
MAN.
NEXT WEEK, JUST AS PREDICTED,
RECENTLY I'VE...
HAD A LOT OF TIME ON MY HANDS, HUH?

SEIOU!
WANT SOME ICE CREAM?
NO.
THANK YOU FOR DINNER.
IT WAS DELICIOUS.

LET'S JUST TALK ABOUT THIS.
.....
.....
...AH...
OKAY...
I...
I WONDER IF YOU'LL LET ME INTO YOUR WORLD?
.....
UM...

.....
.....
...IF YOU COME IN, THEN I HAVE NO CHOICE...
IT'S NOT WHETHER I LET YOU IN OR NOT...
I UNDER-STAND.
SINCE IT'S ANNOYING TO SAY "COME IN" YOURSELF...
YOU WANT ME TO FORCE MY WAY IN.
YOU'RE LIKE A WOMAN WHO PRETENDS TO BE NAIVE.
WHA...

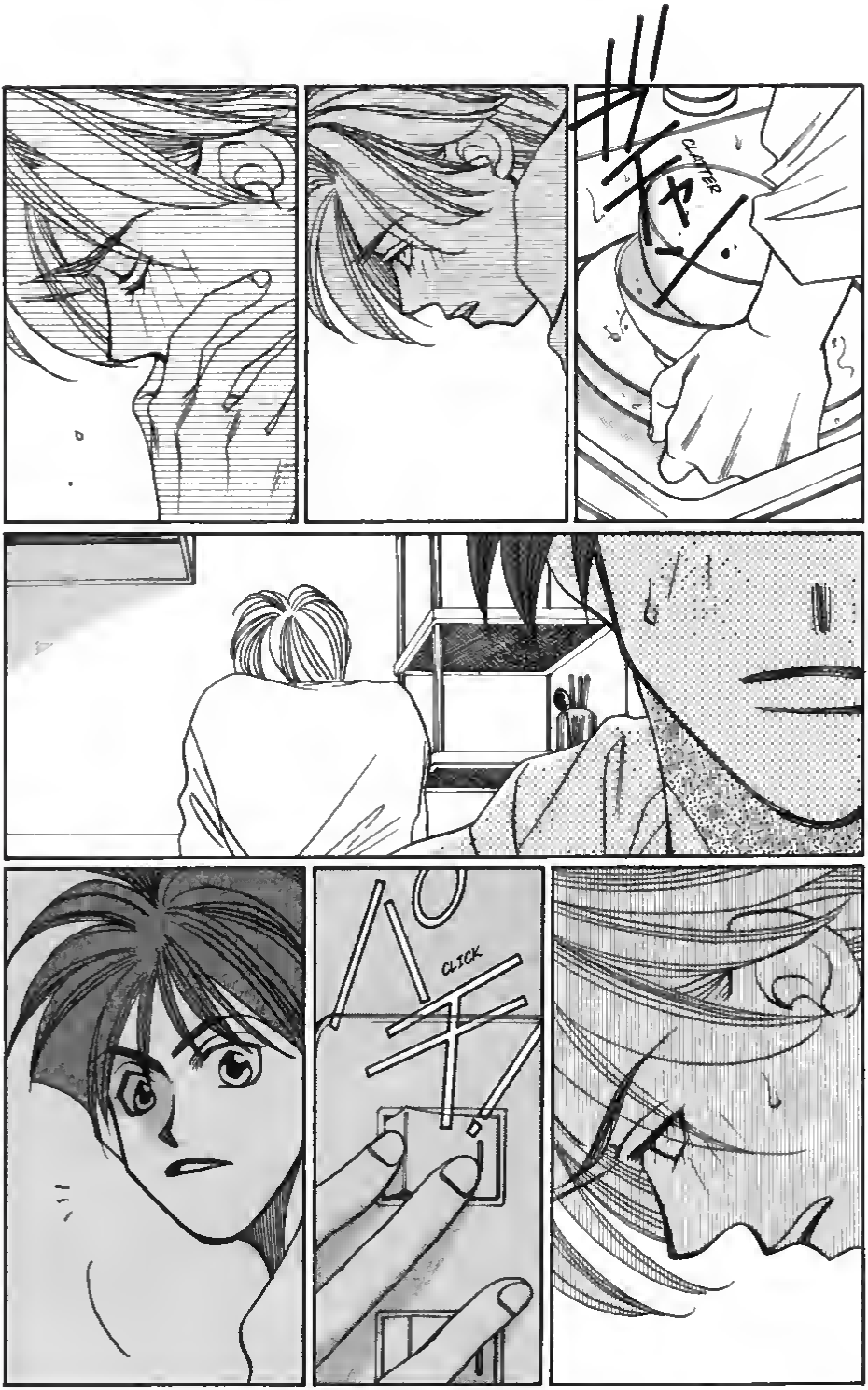
YOU ARE A CHILD! IF I'M THIS MUCH OF A CHILD AT 19, THEN YOU'RE EVEN MORE OF A CHILD!!
I'M NOT A CHILD!
DON'T SAY WEIRD STUFF LIKE THAT! YOU'RE JUST A CHILD!
.....
BUT I'M NOT AS MUCH OF A CHILD AS YOU THINK I AM!!
WHAT WAS IT?
WHAT WAS IT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT?
WE'RE GETTING SIDE-TRACKED...

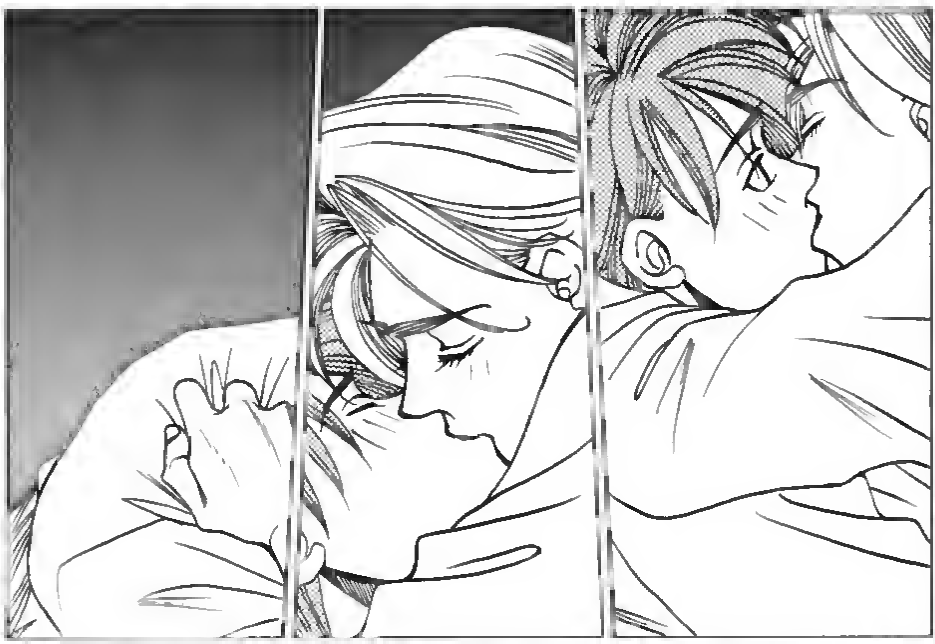
I WANT TO KISS YOU.
HUH?
I WANT TO KISS YOU, KOUTAROU.

I WANT YOU TO KISS ME.
I'LL SAY ANYTHING I WANT TODAY...
AND I'LL DO ANYTHING I WANT.
.....
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU THINK...
I'M GOING HOME TOMORROW.
KISS ME.

NO...
I'M BAD...
AT KISSING.
STEP
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER

カチャ
CLATTER
カチャ
CLATTER


CLATTER
CLICK



GULP...

CHISATO,
WILL YOU BECOME SULLIED FOR ME?
BUT EVEN SO...
THAT YOU CAN'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT ON YOUR BODY AND YOUR LIFE...
I'LL BE PUTTING A GUILTY STAIN...
IT'S OKAY.

IT'S OKAY IF I BECOME SULLIED.
I HATE MYSELF...
——……
FOR SUCH A THING, I WON'T...

OR YOU...

I WANT TO BE INSIDE YOU, KOUTAROU.
I WANT TO SEE THE DIRTIEST PART OF YOU.
I WANT TO TOUCH THE MOST EMBARRASSING PART...
OF YOU...

I'LL BE...
NUMBER 447, HUH?

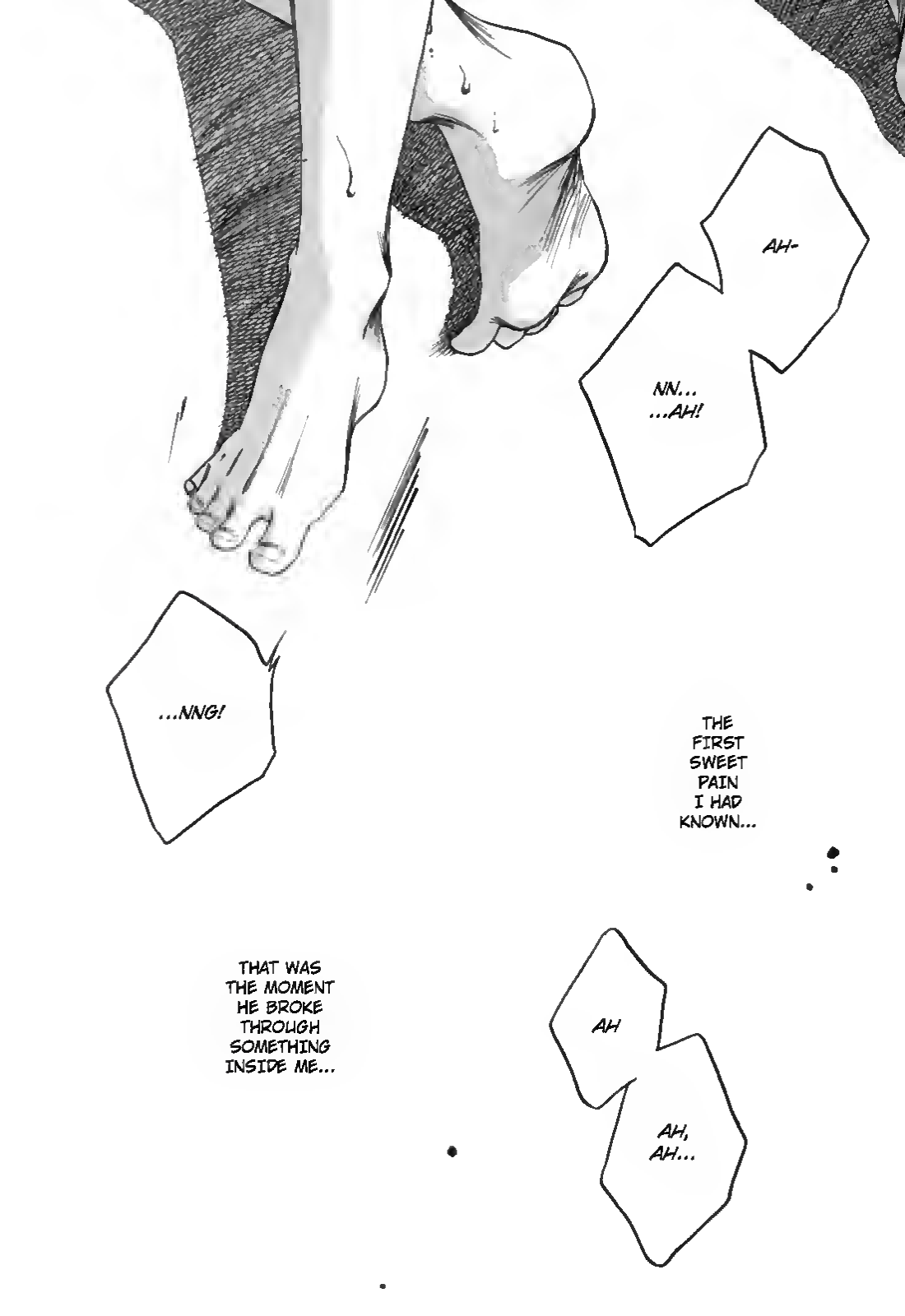
NO, YOU WON'T!
I'VE FELT LIKE THIS.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME...
...THE VERY FIRST TIME!
THIS IS...
THE FIRST TIME FOR ME.

...SHUP...
IN PRO BASEBALL NEWS
LEAGUE, JINGU STADIUM
COMMUNICATING THE TEAM
THE OFFENSIVE PLAN O
THE TEAM'S SLUMP

...NOW THEY HAVE TWO OUTS
...WE'LL SEE IF THE BATTER
...WITH A RUN-BATTED-IN
...AND COMING FROM BEHIND
SHLIPP...
...SHLIP
A-
AH!
...I'M GOING TO COME...!
THIS TIME GO...
FOR A WIN
I DON'T WANT TO COME IN YOUR MOUTH...
...LET ME BE INSIDE YOU...!

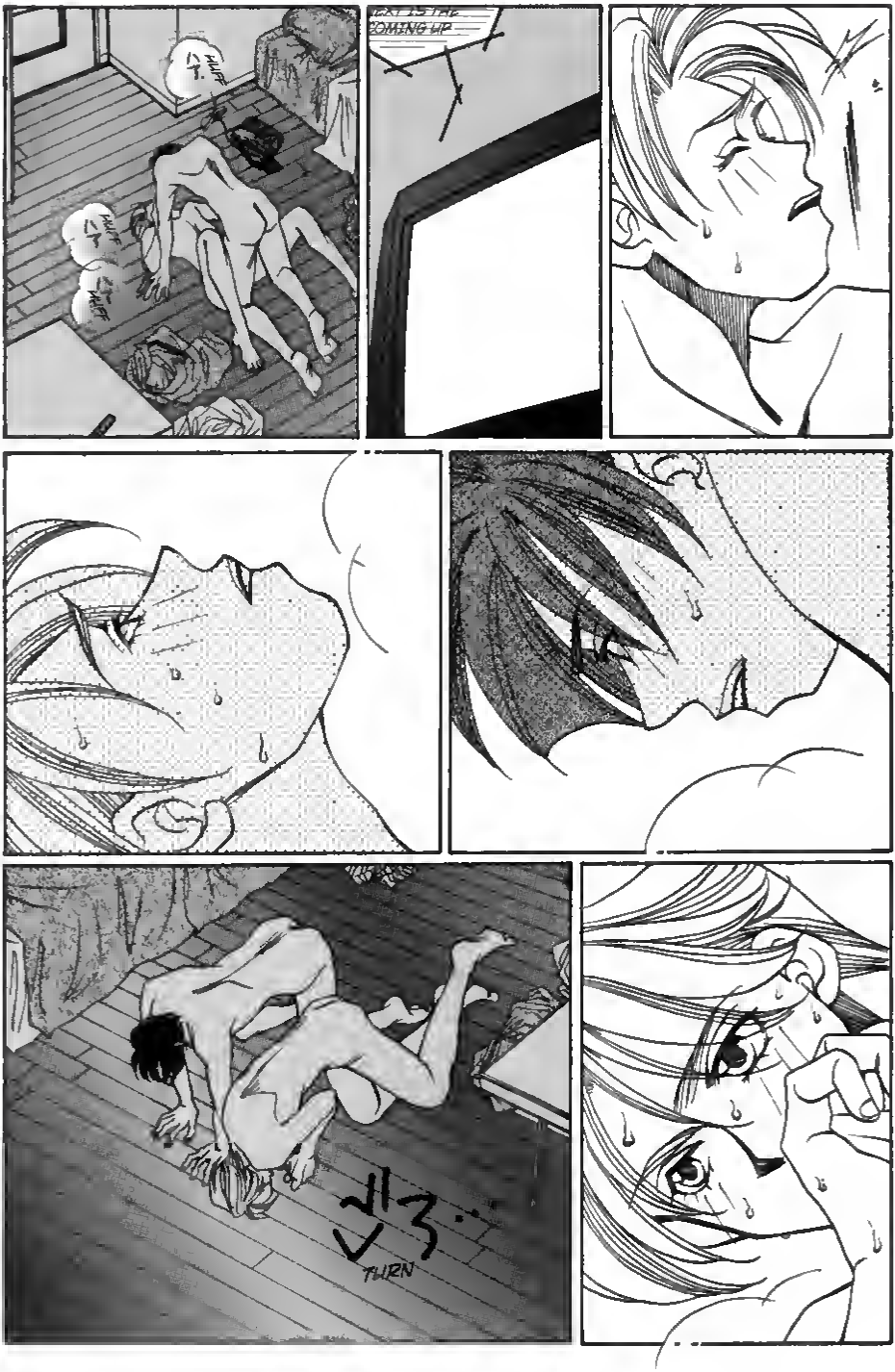
BA-DUM
IT'S OKAY, RIGHT?
...IT'S OKAY TO PUT IT IN HERE, RIGHT?
YEAH...
BA-DUM
BA-DUM

PUT IT IN, CHISATO...
BA-DUM
THE PACIFIC LEAGUE BROUGHT TO YOU BY HIRAOKA DATE!
!
NNNG!


AH-
NN...
...AH!
...NNG!
THE FIRST SWEET PAIN I HAD KNOWN...
THAT WAS THE MOMENT HE BROKE THROUGH SOMETHING INSIDE ME...
AH
AH, AH...

WITH THE SOORING
TIME BEHIND
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

NG...
AH-
AH...
AH...
...COME INSIDE ME...
IT'S OKAY TO COME INSIDE ME, CHISATO.
AH...
...NNG!


HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
WHAT IS THAT COMING UP
TURN

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
GRAB!
THRUST
AH!!

...I WON'T STOP ANY MORE!
I'M NOT WAITING!
WAIT... A SEC...
AH-
AH- CHISATO-
DON'T BE SO ROUGH! YOU IDIOT...
AH!!
AH-
AH...
I WANT TO LET IT ALL OUT.
I WANT TO LET IT ALL OUT INSIDE YOU.
I WANT TO GO DEEPER! I WANT TO BE INSIDE YOU FOR EVER AND EVER!

I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU, KOUTAROU.
I LOVE YOU.
I LOVE YOU, KOUTAROU...
...I LOVE YOU...

CHAPTER 24: YOU AND ME IN ONE ROOM

...WELL? DID YOU GET THE JOB, KAORU?
RAP
RAP
YEP.
I'M DOING PIZZA DELIVERY.
REALLY?
THE PAY'S NOT BAD...
AND I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO RIDE ONE OF THOSE SCOOTERS WITH A ROOF ON IT.
AW... THAT'S CUTE.

AH HA HA
AH HA HA
WAIT UP!
JUST TRY AND CATCH ME~
BIG SPLASH
AUTHOR'S NOTES
HELLO, EVERYONE.
HOW FAR HAS THE STORY NOW PROGRESSED AS A WHOLE? ABOUT THIS FAR
WE STILL HAVE A WAYS TO GO HEIGHT-WIZE, BUT WE HAVE STACKED UP QUITE A FEW BLOCKS. I'M DOING MY BEST.

DOUSEI AI IS THIS TYPE OF MANGA (HALF-JOKING)

"KARAKUHI"
...MUST BE NICE.
IT'S SO SILKY WITHOUT YOU HAVING TO DO ANYTHING.
HUH?
YOUR HAIR.
...OH.
A WHILE AGO...
I WANTED HAIR LIKE THAT...
SO I GOT A STRAIGHT PERM.
AT THAT TIME...
THAT'S HOW I WAS...

I THINK YOUR HAIR IS COMPLETELY FINE...
JUST THE WAY IT IS...
REALLY?
YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.

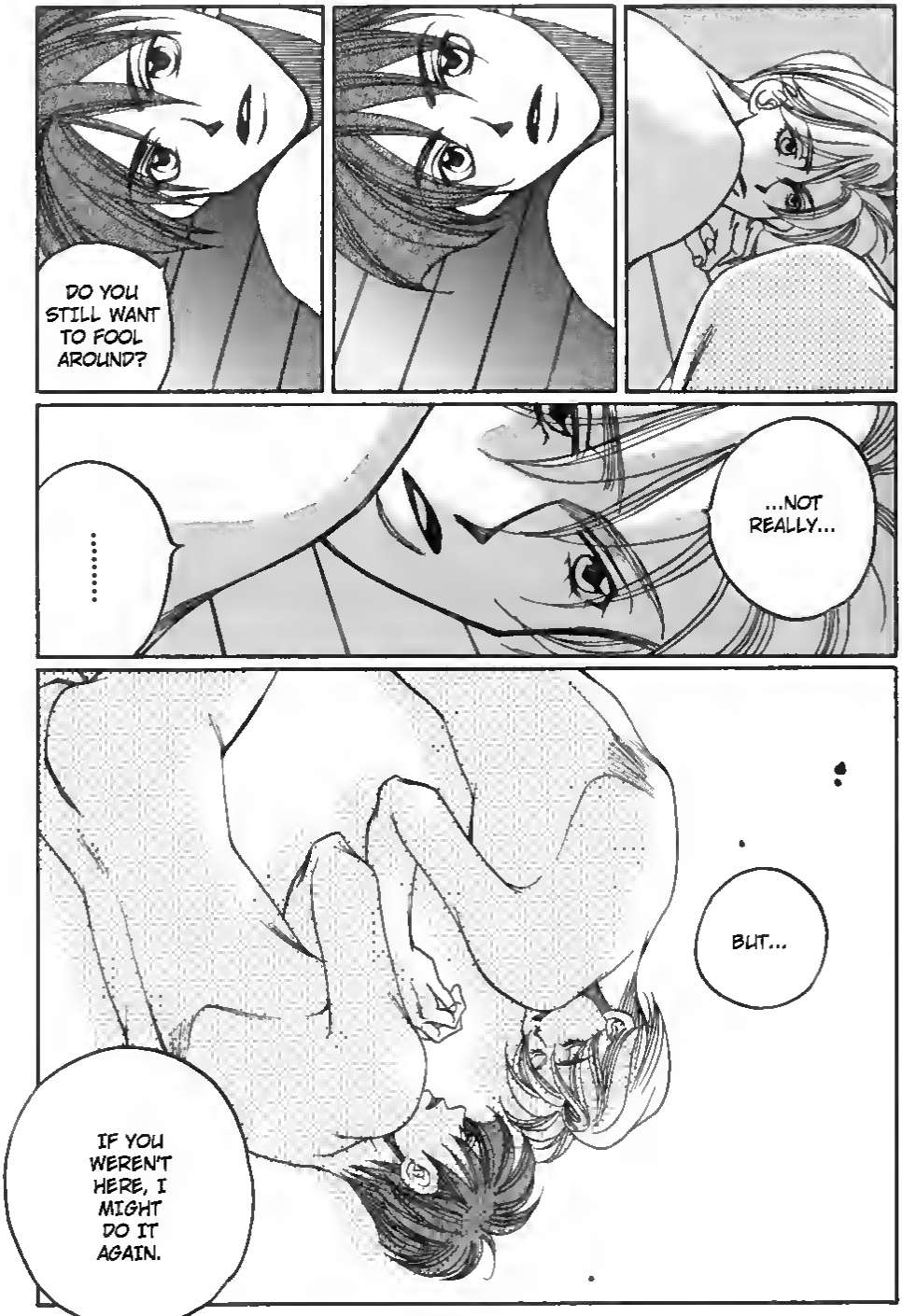
すたっ
STEP
JUST FOR THAT... HUH?
..HUH?
HE CAN'T BE MAD... CAN HE?
すたすた
STEP STEP
I'LL OPEN THE SPICY PEANUT MIX.
THAT'S RIGHT. I HAVE SOME SNACKS THAT I BOUGHT.
DID I IMAGINE THAT...
MUST BE.
WHAT A SHOCK!
Y- YEAH...
AFTER ALL, BEER HAS TO GO WITH SPICY PEANUT MIX, RIGHT?
SPICY PEANUT MIX

HUFF
HUFF
ZZZZZ....
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
...MORE, CHISATO...
...MORE!!
AH...
AH...

AH!!
THRUST
AH!
AH!
AH...
.....
.....
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

HUFF
HUFF
NM...?
KOUTAROU...
CAN I ASK...
ABOUT YOUR PAST?
YEAH...

WAS IT FUN?
WHEN YOU WERE FOOLING AROUND...
IN THE PAST...
NOT REALLY.
.....
EVEN SO...
IT WAS BETTER...
THAN BEING AT HOME.
BUT...
I GUESS...

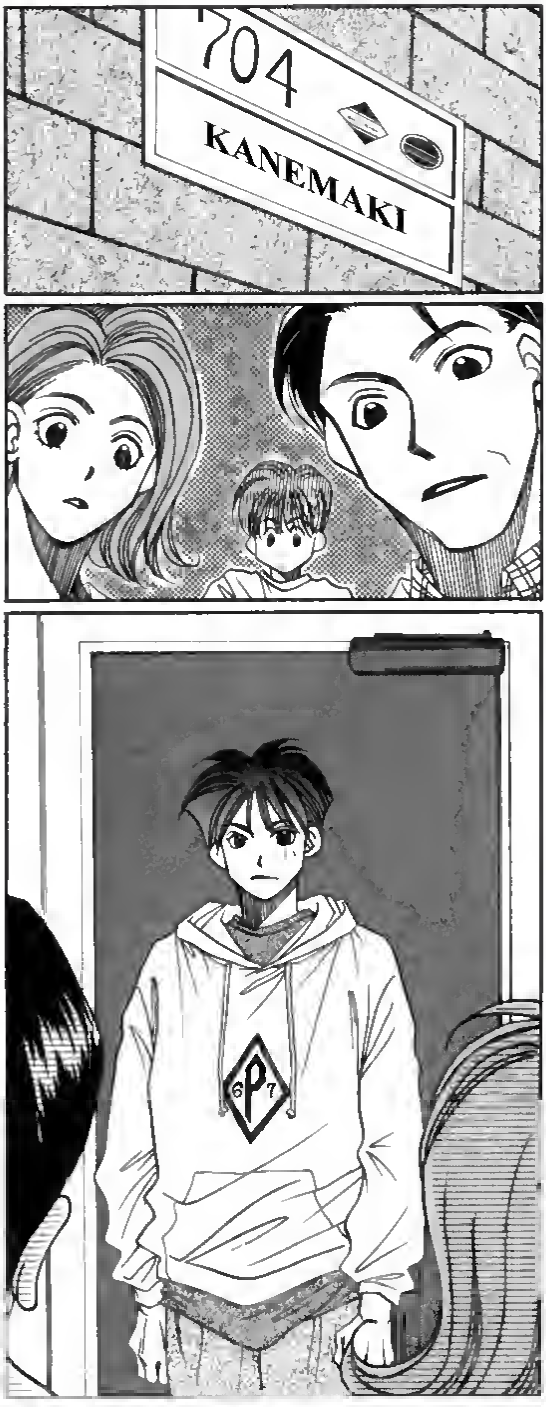

DO YOU STILL WANT TO FOOL AROUND?
.....
...NOT REALLY...
BUT...
IF YOU WEREN'T HERE, I MIGHT DO IT AGAIN.

KOUTAROU,
ARE YOU... IN LOVE WITH ME?
SINCE WHEN?
"SINCE WHEN?"
WELL... SINCE...
SINCE THE BEGINNING...
MAYBE...
.....
YEAH...

...I'M GLAD.
REALLY?
I HAD NO IDEA.
SQUEEZE
...HEY,
DON'T GO HOME...

MY LIFE BURNS WITH A GENTLE CRACKLING.
FALLING IN LOVE WHILE I CRY.
DON'T GO ANYWHERE.
DON'T LEAVE ME.
I UNDERSTAND.
I FEEL THAT I EXIST.
LIVE HERE WITH ME...

MY TIRED OUT CELLS ARE DYING AWAY.
WHILE THEY DIE...
THEY ARE BEING BORN.



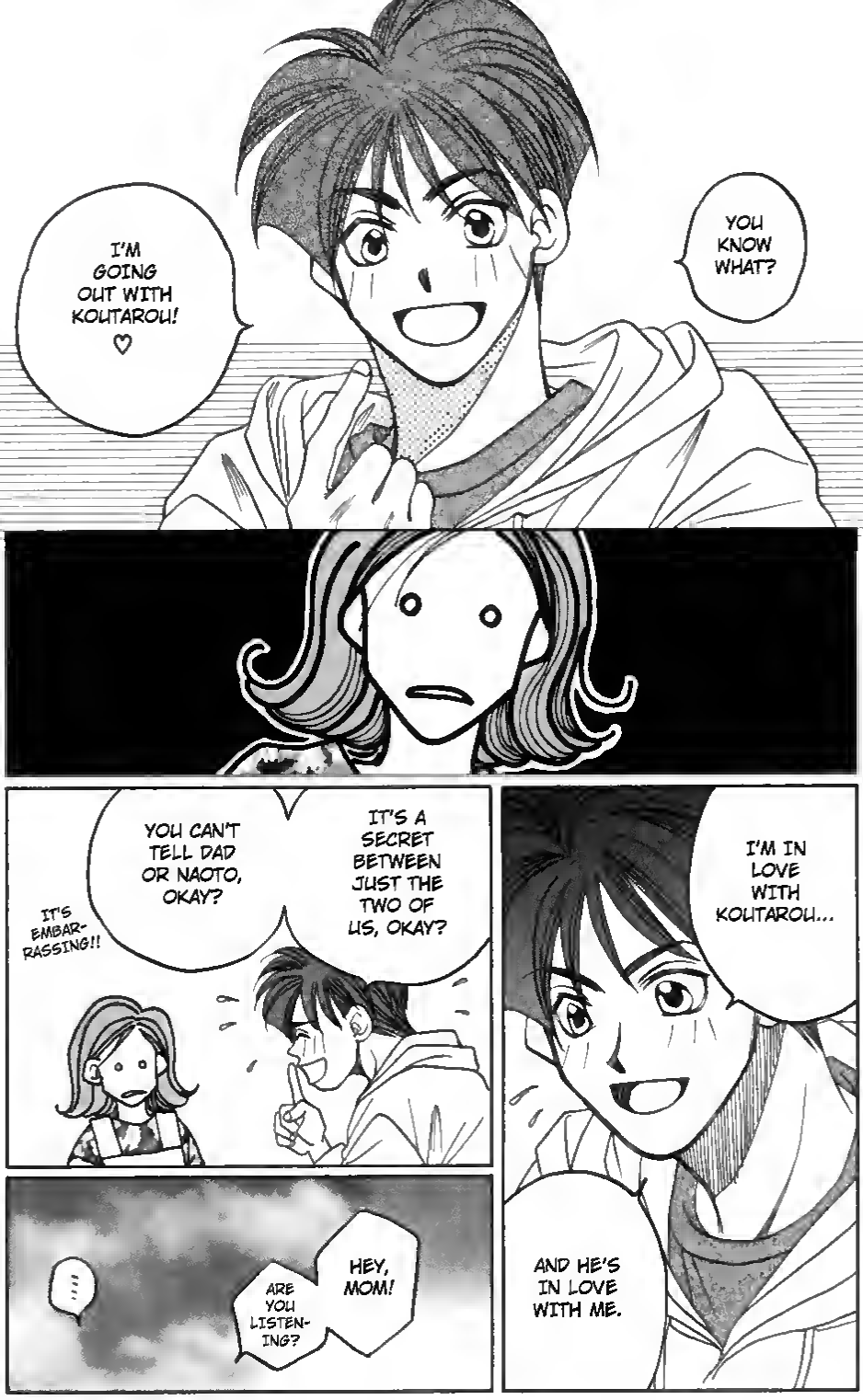
I WILL BECOME A NEW ME.

NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL
STAMP
GUARDIAN SATOSHI KANEMAKI
2ND YEAR, CLASS C-7 CHISATO KANEMAKI
...CHISATO, IF YOU'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT...
AND KNOW IT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO DO...
THEN I WON'T STOP YOU, BUT...
YEAH.
IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FROM NOW ON.
IT WILL BE DIFFICULT ...
AND A LOT OF WORK...
BUT I'LL DO MY BEST.

I CAME TO GET MY THINGS.
SO, TODAY...
.....
I'M...
GOING TO LIVE WITH KOUTAROU.
IT'S JUST...
THAT I THINK IT WOULD BE NICE TO DO THAT NOW...
IT'S NOT THAT I HATE YOU TWO AND NAOTO.

I JUST FEEL LIKE RIGHT NOW I WANT TO TRY TO DO...
EVERYTHING I WANT TO DO.
I'M VERY SORRY.
I'LL BE ALRIGHT...
OKAY?
I'LL MAKE SURE TO CALL AND COME BACK LIKE THIS ONCE IN A WHILE...
DON'T WORRY.
.....

.....
THANK YOU.
OH, OKAY.
GATCHA
ガチャ
CHISATO,
HERE'S THE JACKET I SENT TO BE DRY CLEANED...
DEPRESSED...
しゅん…
YOU THINK, "IF ONLY I WERE 20 YEARS YOUNGER...," RIGHT?
HUH...
WELL...
HEY, MOM.
YOU THINK KOUTAROU'S PRETTY NICE, ♡ RIGHT?
WHAP WHAP
ばん ばん
THAT'S RIGHT!
I'M GLAD. ♡
NO WAY!
NOT 20 YEARS! 10 YEARS WOULD BE PLENTY! ♡


YOU KNOW WHAT?
I'M GOING OUT WITH KOUTAROU! ♡
IT'S A SECRET BETWEEN JUST THE TWO OF US, OKAY?
YOU CAN'T TELL DAD OR NAOTO, OKAY?
IT'S EMBARRASSING!!
I'M IN LOVE WITH KOUTAROU...
AND HE'S IN LOVE WITH ME.
HEY, MOM!
ARE YOU LISTENING?
...

GATTCHA
ガチャ

AUTHOR'S NOTES:

I REALLY LOVE SWEET THINGS.

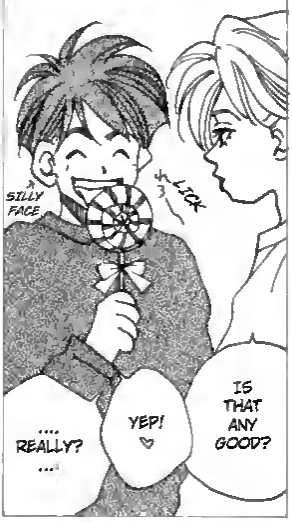
BUT SOMEHOW I CAN'T EAT THINGS THAT ONLY TASTE SWEET.

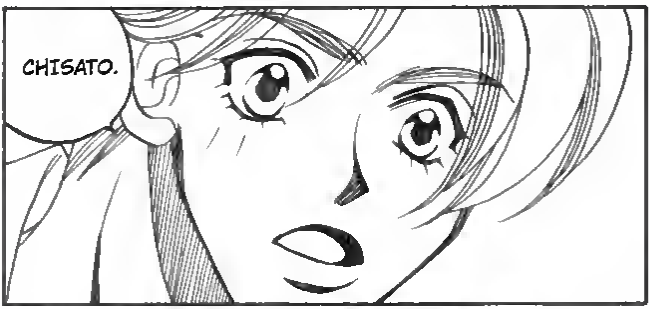
MANDARIN ORANGES WITHOUT SOURNESS ARE UNAPPETIZING AND I CAN'T EAT THEM. WITH CHOCOLATE TOO, I PREFER DARK WITH A BITTER TASTE.

BUT IT SEEMS LIKE THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO HATE SOUR OR BITTER THINGS.

WELL, I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT THE PEOPLE WHO READ MY MANGA WOULD LIKE THOSE PEOPLE...

BUT VOLUME 3 IS TOO SWEET FOR ME. WELL, IN A LONG STORY THERE ARE TIMES LIKE THIS, HUH?

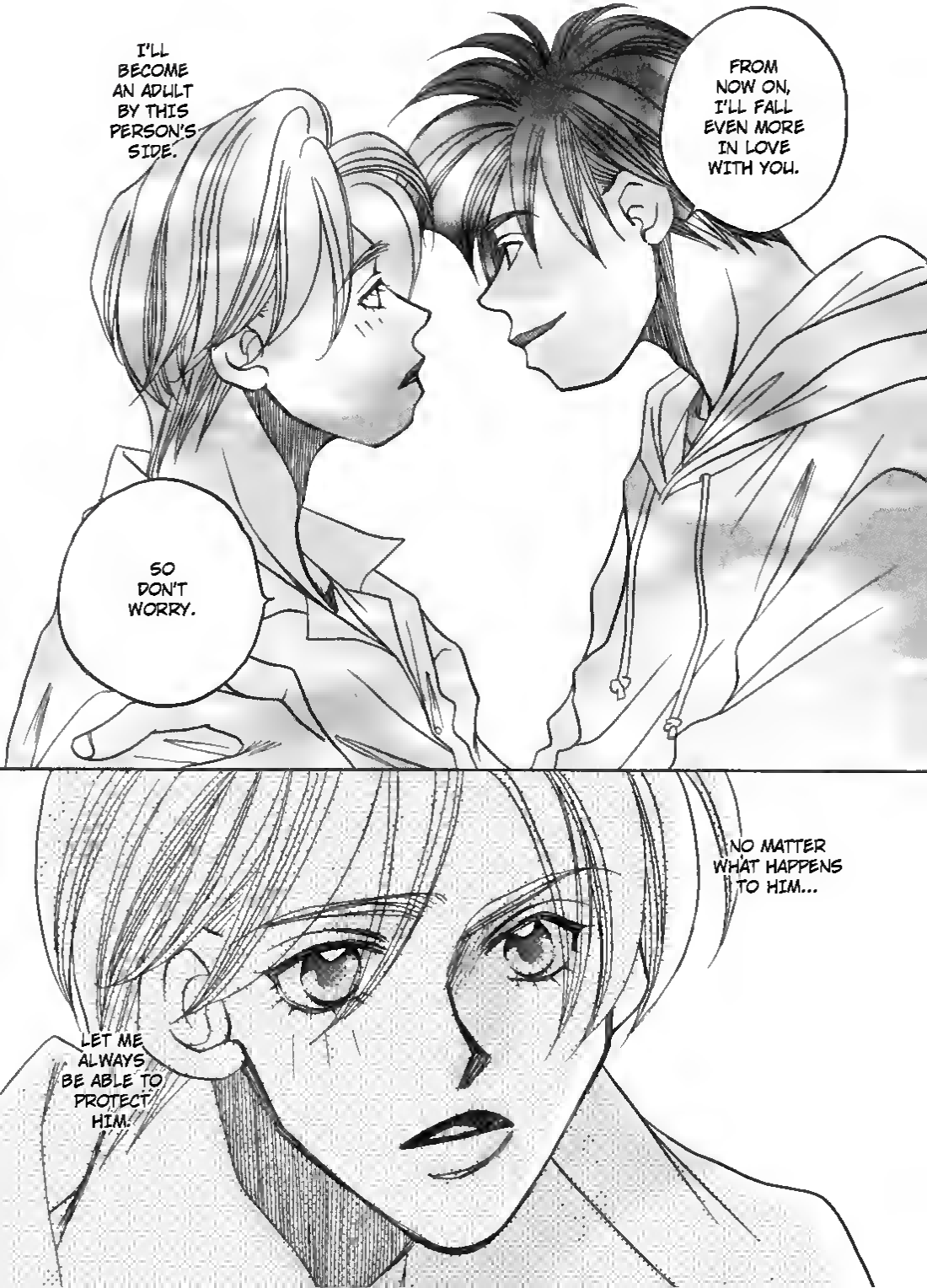




...I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU WOULDN'T COME BACK AGAIN.
...MAYBE YOU HAD GONE HOME JUST LIKE THAT...
HUH... WHAT'S WRONG?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?!

I TOLD YOU I'D DO THAT, RIGHT?
I EVEN PERSUADED THEM ALL BY MYSELF!
I KNOW, BUT...!
I KNOW, BUT...
I TOLD YOU I WAS JUST HAVING MY PARENTS SIGN MY NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL, RIGHT?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
SINCE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE FELT THIS WAY...
I'M UNEASY...
I KNOW, BUT...
I CAN'T HELP BUT BE UNEASY, YOU KNOW?
CHISATO,
...DO YOU LOVE ME?
...TELL ME YOU LOVE ME...

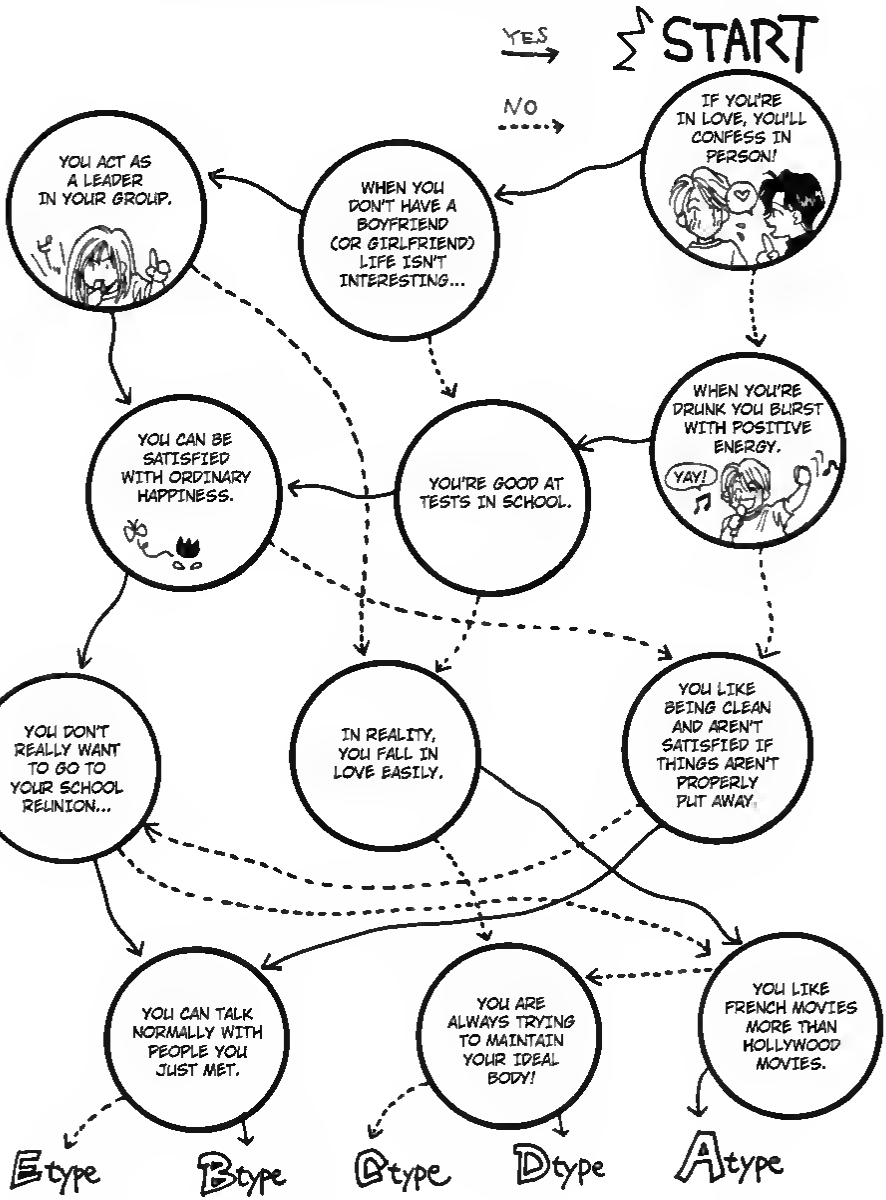
"KOUTAROU IS MORE PURE THAN YOU."
"HE MIGHT BREAK DOWN AGAIN IN THE FUTURE."
"THAT'S THE TYPE OF GUY HE IS..."
I LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU, BUT...
I LOVE YOU, KOUTAROU.
KOUTAROU, I LOVE YOU.

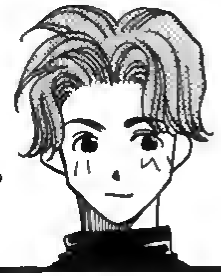

I'LL BECOME AN ADULT BY THIS PERSON'S SIDE.
FROM NOW ON, I'LL FALL EVEN MORE IN LOVE WITH YOU.
SO DON'T WORRY.
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM...
LET ME ALWAYS BE ABLE TO PROTECT HIM.

I'LL BECOME...
A GREAT PERSON.
THAT DAY WAS THE BORDER WHERE...
OUR "LIVING TOGETHER" CHANGED INTO "COHABITATION."
TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 4

PERSONALITY TEST FLOWCHART

DECIDE ON YOUR PERSONALITY ONCE AND FOR ALL WITH THIS FLOWCHART!
LET'S TRY IT! RESULTS ARE ON THE NEXT PAGE.
(IT'S PRETTY HAPHAZARD, SO PLEASE DON'T TAKE IT TOO SERIOUSLY.)


START
YES
NO
IF YOU'RE IN LOVE, YOU'LL CONFESS IN PERSON!
WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE A BOYFRIEND (OR GIRLFRIEND) LIFE ISN'T INTERESTING...
YOU ACT AS A LEADER IN YOUR GROUP.
WHEN YOU'RE DRUNK YOU BURST WITH POSITIVE ENERGY.
YAY!
YOU'RE GOOD AT TESTS IN SCHOOL.
YOU CAN BE SATISFIED WITH ORDINARY HAPPINESS.
YOU LIKE BEING CLEAN AND AREN'T SATISFIED IF THINGS AREN'T PROPERLY PUT AWAY.
IN REALITY, YOU FALL IN LOVE EASILY.
YOU DON'T REALLY WANT TO GO TO YOUR SCHOOL REUNION...
YOU LIKE FRENCH MOVIES MORE THAN HOLLYWOOD MOVIES.
YOU ARE ALWAYS TRYING TO MAINTAIN YOUR IDEAL BODY!
YOU CAN TALK NORMALLY WITH PEOPLE YOU JUST MET.
E type
B type
C type
D type
A type



A TSUBAKI TYPE

IN SPITE OF YOUR INNER SELF BEING QUITE SIMPLE, YOU HATE BEING THOUGHT OF AS A SIMPLE PERSON BY THOSE AROUND YOU. YOUR UNIQUE MOOD IS CHARMING, AND EVERYONE IS FOND OF YOU. BUT WHEN YOU GET CARRIED AWAY, YOU MIGHT UNINTENTIONALLY BE RESENTED BY THOSE CLOSE TO YOU. (LAUGHS)

B KOUTAROU TYPE

YOU'RE SOMEONE WHO BEHAVES WARMLY AND SMILES KINDLY IN FRONT OF EVERYONE, BUT YOU DON'T LET DOWN THE BARRIERS TO YOUR INNER THOUGHTS EASILY. TO THAT EXTENT, WHEN YOU FALL IN LOVE, YOU LOSE YOUR HEAD AND APPEAR TO THOROUGHLY DEVOTE YOURSELF TO THAT PERSON. YOU WILL HAVE A GOOD ROMANCE WITH A GOOD PARTNER AND SLOWLY AND LEISURELY BECOME HAPPY.

C CHISATO TYPE

YOUR BIGGEST CHARM IS YOUR HONESTY. HOWEVER, SINCE YOU GRADUALLY GET LAZY WHEN YOU'RE SPOILED, YOU SHOULD HAVE DILIGENT SELF-CONTROL. IF YOUR SKILLS AND CURIOSITY ARE IGNITED, YOU ALSO HAVE THE ABILITY TO OPEN THE WAY TO BECOMING AN EXTRAORDINARY PERSON. RAISE YOURSELF IN A GRAND WAY.

D MAHORIN TYPE

YOU'RE A MASTER AT IMPROVING YOURSELF. YOU EXPEND A LOT OF EFFORT JUST TO SUPPORT YOUR OVERFLOWING SELF CONFIDENCE. HOWEVER, FOR SOME REASON, YOU ONLY FALL FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE INDIFFERENT TO YOU, AND IT SEEMS LIKE THE ONES YOU FAVOR WON'T GIVE YOU A SECOND GLANCE. BE CAREFUL NOT TO BECOME TOO ARROGANT.

E KAORU TYPE

YOU ARE A NERVOUS AND TIMID PERSON. YOUR STRONG POINT IS BEING METHODICAL, BUT YOU DON'T SEEM TO HAVE THE COURAGE TO CARRY OUT GRAND ACTIONS. YET THE UNEXPECTED TRUE CHARACTER WITHIN YOUR HEART IS ONLY SLEEPING... IF YOU CAN UNLEASH THE OTHER PART OF YOURSELF, YOUR LIFE WILL CHANGE.♡

HONEY FLASH!!